

# NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

**Winter 2011**

Volume 64, Number 1



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## Cover

*Wilma Parker's The Amazing Grace, an oil painting that hung in an exhibition of a selection of the artist's work at the Naval War College Museum from August to November 2010 and has since been donated by the artist to the Naval War College Foundation. The painting commemorates the commissioning of USS Hopper (DDG 70) on 6 September 1997, to which the artist was invited. She found the ceremony an especially "joyous occasion," she writes, as the ship had been named for Grace Hopper (1906–92), a pioneering computer scientist and "the incredible Rear Admiral . . . who computerized the Navy." Rear Admiral Hopper famously invented the word "debugging," on the occasion of actually removing a moth from within the early Harvard Mark I computer. The new destroyer, writes Parker, "is affectionately known as the 'Amazing Grace,' and it's the joy of her achievement, expressed in the jaunty flags and good wishes on Commissioning Day, that I hoped to capture in this work."*

*The Amazing Grace, 36 × 59 inches, oil on linen, by Wilma Parker. Collection of the artist. Photograph courtesy of the Naval War College Museum.*

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*Michael Evans*

In contemporary Western culture, the teachings of the Hellenistic philosophy of Stoicism may seem redundant, but its teachings on morality, honor, and character can be of much value to Western military professionals today.

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*Daniel J. Kostecka*

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*Thomas G. Mahnken*

The naval battles off Guadalcanal illustrate vividly that technological superiority does not guarantee victory. It was only after the campaign that the U.S. Navy developed concepts and organizations to exploit its technological potential; when it finally did, the result was deadly.



**Friendly Fire and the Limits of the Military Justice System. . . . . 122***Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Davidson, SJD, U.S. Army (Retired)*

Deaths at the hands of “friendly” forces have occurred throughout recorded history but in the U.S. armed forces have rarely resulted in courts-martial and hardly ever in conviction. Why?

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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As the United States enters its tenth year at war with an amorphous yet brutal enemy, it is worth stepping back from the familiar policy issues we continue to debate as a nation to reflect on what it means for our armed forces to be at war today. Ten years ago, the critical issue facing the American military was widely said to be “transformation”—the refashioning of our armed forces principally through the introduction of new technologies that would enable us to retain our competitive edge in the new networked security environment of the twenty-first century. Today, few believe that technology is the answer to defeating the global threat of violent Islamism. In fact, the Islamists have leveraged technology very effectively against us in their own version of networked warfare. We have certainly had our own successes in this arena (drones, innovative anti-IED techniques, and the like), but technology can also be a snare. Soldiers at their computer consoles need to remember that they are not playing games. More generally, we need to remain mindful of the harsh realities of war and of the necessity for our leaders, our commanders in the field, and our soldiers individually to confront them and come to terms with them. In this spirit, we begin with two thoughtful discussions of the moral and psychological challenges of the contemporary battlefield and how the men and women of our armed forces should approach them. In “Moral, Ethical, and Psychological Preparation of Soldiers and Units for Combat,” Brigadier General H. R. McMaster, U.S. Army, emphasizes the importance of values-oriented education and training in our armed forces for the counterinsurgency fight, for which the armed forces were largely unprepared, as he argues, in 2001. He also notes that this kind of preparation is all the more necessary given the debased and debasing violence that increasingly pervades American popular culture. Like General McMaster, Michael Evans is the coauthor of a manual on counterinsurgency—in his case, for the Australian army. Currently a fellow at the Australian Defence College in Canberra, Evans makes in “Captains of the Soul” a powerful argument for the enduring value of the philosophy of the Stoics as a sort of moral armor for today’s uniformed warriors.

There has been considerable alarm in some quarters in recent years over the growing Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean, and in particular over the possible establishment of naval bases in the region by the People’s Republic of

China (PRC). In “Places and Bases: The Chinese Navy’s Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean,” Daniel J. Kostecka offers a careful and detailed analysis of what is actually known about Chinese activities there and of what can be deduced from them (and from the limited open discussion of the topic in the PRC itself) about likely Chinese intentions. He concludes that there is little to support the idea that the Chinese are pursuing a deliberate plan (the “string of pearls” strategy) to develop a basing infrastructure in the Indian Ocean but that they will probably continue the existing pattern of limited port visits for purposes of sustainment and repair. In particular, he argues that the Pakistani port of Gwadar is unlikely for a number of reasons to be developed by the Chinese for military purposes.

The naval and maritime capabilities of allied and friendly nations continues to be a major focus of interest for the *Review*. In “Franco-British Relations at Sea and Overseas: A Tale of Two Navies,” Alexandre Sheldon-Duplaix, a historian in the naval section of the French Defense Historical Service at Vincennes, offers a uniquely informed discussion of recent interaction in naval affairs between two of our most important European allies. Sheldon-Duplaix opens into third-party naval cooperation generally a window that should be of particular interest to the U.S. Navy as it moves to strengthen its various bilateral naval relationships. With the recent revelation that the Royal Navy is considering draconian cuts to its current force in order to preserve its planned new aircraft carriers, his article is particularly timely and may be an important signpost to the future.

An article in this issue revisits aspects of American naval history. In “Asymmetric Warfare at Sea: The Naval Battles off Guadalcanal, 1942–1943,” Thomas G. Mahnken, a professor in the Strategy and Policy Department of the Naval War College, traces the efforts of American commanders over the course of this six-month campaign to adjust to Japanese tactical and operational advantages in night fighting at sea.

The tragedy of friendly-fire incidents in Afghanistan has become an increasingly prominent issue in media coverage of that war. Michael J. Davidson, in “Friendly Fire and the Limits of the Military Justice System,” addresses the problem of accountability for such incidents and the difficulty of dealing with them in a legal framework. Finally, in her essay “Changing Interrogation Facility Management to Defeat the Enemy,” Virginia Cruse brings us back to the question of how to fight the war on terror, with an innovative proposal for developing a holistic approach to terrorist incarceration and interrogation.

#### NEWPORT PAPER 36

Jan S. Breemer’s *Defeating the U-boat: Inventing Antisubmarine Warfare*, Newport Paper 36, is now available—on our website and for sale online by the

Government Printing Office (at [bookstore.gpo.gov](http://bookstore.gpo.gov)). In it Dr. Breemer assesses the British response to the World War I German submarine threat, a story that holds important lessons for the U.S. Navy today. The Royal Navy's refusal to consider seriously the option of convoying merchant vessels demonstrates the extent to which professional military cultures can thwart technical and operational innovation even in circumstances of existential threat. As previously announced in these pages, paper copies of Newport Papers will hereafter be mailed or available free only to a limited number of institutional subscribers selected by the editor and the College's Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History. Print copies of earlier titles (Newport Papers 1–35) remain available on request while stocks last.

### THE ELLER PRIZE

We are delighted to learn from the Director of Naval History, Rear Admiral J. A. DeLoach, USN (Ret.), that the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) and the Naval Historical Foundation have jointly awarded the Rear Admiral Ernest M. Eller Prize in Naval History for 2009 to Trent Hone, for his "U.S. Navy Surface Battle Doctrine and Victory in the Pacific," which appeared in the Winter 2009 *Naval War College Review* (and also won our own history prize—see below).

### WINNERS OF OUR ANNUAL ARTICLE PRIZES

The President of the Naval War College has awarded prizes to the winners of the annual Hugh G. Nott and Edward S. Miller competitions for articles appearing in the *Naval War College Review*.

The Nott Prize, established in the early 1980s, is given to the authors of the best articles (less those considered for the Miller Prize) in the *Review* in the preceding publishing year. Cash awards are funded through the generosity of the Naval War College Foundation.

- First place: Eric Hagt and Matthew Durnin, "China's Antiship Ballistic Missile: Developments and Missing Links," Autumn 2009 (\$1,000, shared between coauthors)
- Second place: Andrew S. Erickson and David D. Yang, "Using the Land to Control the Sea? Chinese Analysts Consider the Antiship Ballistic Missile," Autumn 2009 (\$650, shared between coauthors)
- Third place: Gary E. Weir, "Fish, Family, and Profit: Piracy and the Horn of Africa," Summer 2009 (\$350).

Two articles were selected for honorable mention: Admiral James Stavridis, USN, and Captain Mark Hagerott, USN, "The Heart of an Officer: Joint, Inter-agency, and International Operations and Navy Career Development," and

Andrew Erickson and Lyle Goldstein, “Gunboats for China’s New ‘Grand Canals’? Probing the Intersection of Beijing’s Naval and Oil Security Policies,” both Spring 2009.

The Miller Prize was founded in 1992 by the historian Edward S. Miller for the author of the best historical article appearing in the *Review* in the same period. This year’s winner is Trent Hone, for “U.S. Navy Surface Battle Doctrine and Victory in the Pacific” (Winter 2009, \$500). In addition, “Midway and the Indian Ocean” (Autumn 2009), by Jeremy Black, received honorable mention.

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Pelham G. Boyer, Managing Editor

# MORAL, ETHICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION OF SOLDIERS AND UNITS FOR COMBAT

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*Address delivered on 14 May 2010 at the Naval War College Spring  
Ethics Conference by Brigadier General H. R. McMaster, U.S. Army*

I want to begin by thanking you for volunteering to serve our nation and human-kind in time of war. We are engaged, as previous generations were engaged, against enemies who pose a great threat to all civilized peoples. As those generations defeated Nazi fascism, Japanese imperialism, and communist totalitarianism, we will defeat these enemies, who cynically use a perverted interpretation of religion to incite hatred and violence.

The murder of more than three thousand of our fellow Americans on September 11, 2001, is etched indelibly in all of our memories. Since those attacks, our nation has been at war with those who believe that there are no innocent Americans. It is those of you who have volunteered for military service in time of war who will continue to stand between terrorists who murder innocents—including children—as they do almost every day in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen—and those whom those terrorists would victimize.

As the recent attempt to commit mass murder on a flight bound for Detroit reminds us, battlegrounds overseas are inexorably connected to our own security. Our enemies seek to enlist masses of ignorant, disaffected young people with a sophisticated campaign of propaganda and disinformation. They work within and across borders.

And our fight against this networked movement is unprecedented, for several reasons. It is a new kind of threat because of the enemy's ability to communicate and mobilize resources globally. Moreover, the enemy employs mass murder of innocent civilians as its principal tactic. We recognize that if these terrorists and murderers were to gain access to weapons of mass destruction, attacks such as those on September 11th and those against innocents elsewhere would pale in comparison.



As President Obama observed in Oslo on 10 December 2009, “To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism—it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason.” He observed that “a non-violent movement could not have stopped Hitler’s armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda’s leaders to lay down their arms.” America, he observed, has used its military power in places like the Balkans and today in Haiti “because we seek a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if other peoples’ children and grandchildren can live in freedom and prosperity.”\* I firmly believe that the servicemen and -women here today are both warriors and humanitarians.

The Army’s recently published *Capstone Concept* is a document that describes the Army’s vision of future armed conflict. It identifies a continuing need for “cohesive teams and resilient soldiers who are capable of overcoming the enduring psychological and moral challenges of combat.”†

I would like to focus my remarks on military leaders’ connected responsibilities of ensuring moral and ethical conduct in war while also preparing our soldiers psychologically for the extraordinary demands of combat. It is likely that you will be called on to advise your commanders in that connection, and I thought that I might share some thoughts on the moral and ethical preparation of soldiers and units for the challenges they are likely to face in combat.

Prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, much of the debate over the nature of future armed conflict focused on the importance of emerging technologies. Many believed that these technologies would completely transform war. They called this a “revolution in military affairs.” New communications, information, surveillance, and precision-strike technologies would permit technologically advanced military forces to wage war rapidly, decisively, and efficiently. We were seduced by technology.

Yet this ahistorical definition of armed conflict divorced war from its political nature. It tried to simplify the problem of future war to a targeting effort. All we had to do was target the enemies’ conventional forces—which, conveniently, looked just like ours. This approach did little to prepare us for the challenges we subsequently faced in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely of the British army observed,

for many military professionals, warfare—the practice of war, and warfighting—combat, were synonymous, thereby misleading themselves that there was no more to the practice of war than combat. True, some armed forces found themselves involved

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\* “Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize,” *The White House: President Barack Obama*, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

† U.S. Army Dept., *The Army Capstone Concept*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0 (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Training and Doctrine Command, 21 December 2009), available at [www.tradoc.army.mil](http://www.tradoc.army.mil).

in other operations. . . . But these missions were largely considered by many military establishments to be aberrations—Operations Other Than War, as they came to be known in British and American doctrine—distractions from the “real thing”: large scale, hi-tech, inter-state conflict.\*

The lack of intellectual preparation limited military effectiveness and made it harder for our leaders and forces to adapt to the reality of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But our military is a learning institution, and we adapted to the demands of the conflicts after the removal of the Taliban and Hussein regimes. The U.S. military undertook a range of adaptations, from improving our military education and training to refining our tactics, to investigating abuses and other failures. These adaptations derived, in part, from a better appreciation for the political complexity of the wars we were in—and the complexity of war in general. Many of these lessons were formalized in the December 2006 publication of a counterinsurgency manual. This manual was meant to provide the doctrinal foundation for education, training, and operations.† Our forces *have* adapted, and leaders *have* ensured ethical conduct. Every day, our soldiers take risks and make sacrifices to protect innocents.

The orthodoxy of the revolution in military affairs had conflated warfare and warfighting. It had dehumanized our understanding of war, ignored critical continuities in warfare, and exaggerated the effect of technology on the nature of armed conflict. As John Keegan observed in *The Face of Battle*, his classic 1976 study of combat across five centuries, the human dimension of war exhibits a high degree of continuity:

What battles have in common is human: the behaviour of men struggling to reconcile their instinct for self-preservation, their sense of honour and the achievement of some aim over which other men are ready to kill them. The study of battle is therefore always a study of fear and usually of courage, always of leadership, usually of obedience; always of compulsion, sometimes of insubordination; always of anxiety, sometimes of elation or catharsis; always of uncertainty and doubt, misinformation and misapprehension, usually also of faith and sometimes of vision; always of violence, sometimes also of cruelty, self-sacrifice, compassion; above all, it is always a study of solidarity and usually also of disintegration—for it is toward the disintegration of human groups that battle is directed.‡

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\* John Kiszely, *Post-modern Challenges for Modern Warriors*, Shrivenham Paper 5 (Shrivenham, U.K.: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, December 2007), p. 6, available at [www.da.mod.uk](http://www.da.mod.uk).

† U.S. Army Dept./U.S. Navy Dept., *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual (FM) 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center/Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, December 2006) [hereafter COIN manual], available at [www.fas.org/](http://www.fas.org/).

‡ John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking, 1976), p. 83.

Keegan was obviously sensitive to the social and psychological dimensions of combat, but he argued against turning the study of war over to sociologists or psychologists. Keegan contended that understanding war and warriors required an interdisciplinary approach and a “long historical perspective.”

If you take away one thing from our discussion tonight, I ask you to embrace your duty to study, as a complement to your expertise in the law of war and operational law, the history, literature, psychology, and philosophy of war and warfare, as well as memoirs and accounts of combat experiences. It is our duty as leaders to develop our own understandings of our profession and the character of armed conflict. But I would also like to talk with you about how you might help your commanders ensure your troopers’ ethical conduct in war and steel your units against the disintegration that Keegan observes can occur under the extraordinary physical and psychological strains of combat.

Because our enemy is unscrupulous, some argue for a relaxation of ethical and moral standards and the use of force with *less* discrimination, because the ends—the defeat of the enemy—justify the means employed.\* To think this way would be a grave mistake. The war in which we are engaged demands that we retain the moral high ground despite the depravity of our enemies.

Ensuring ethical conduct goes beyond the law of war and must include a consideration of our values—our ethos. Prior to the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan, ethical training in preparation for combat was centered on the law of war. The law of war codifies the principal tenets of just-war theory, especially *jus in bello* principles of discrimination and proportionality. Training covered the Geneva Conventions and the relevant articles of the U.S. military’s Uniform Code of Military Justice. As Christopher Coker observes in *The Warrior Ethos*, however, individual and institutional values are more important than legal constraints on immoral behavior; legal contracts are often observed only as long as others honor them or as long as they are enforced.† Experience in Afghanistan and Iraq inspired the U.S. military to emphasize values training as the principal means of ensuring moral and ethical conduct in combat.

Utilitarianism and the thinking of philosopher John Stuart Mill would have us focus on achieving good consequences in this conflict. As the Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency (COIN) manual points out, the insurgent often hopes to provoke the excessive or indiscriminate use of force.‡ We are fighting

\* For example, some French army officers made this argument during the War of Algerian Independence. See Lou DiMarco, “Losing the Moral Compass: Torture and *Guerre Revolutionnaire* in the Algerian War,” *Parameters* (Summer 2006), pp. 70–72, available at [www.carlisle.army.mil/](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/).

† Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 135–38.

‡ COIN manual, p. 7-5.

this war on two battlegrounds—intelligence and perception. We must—locally in Afghanistan and Iraq, and broadly in the war on terror—be able to separate terrorists and insurgents from the population. This means treating people with respect and building relationships with people that lead to trust. And this trust leads to intelligence about the enemy. We have to counter what is a very sophisticated enemy propaganda and disinformation campaign and clarify our true intentions—not just with words but with our deeds. This is particularly difficult because the enemy seeks to place the onus of indiscriminate warfare on us by provoking overreactions, denying us positive contact with the population, and blaming his own murderous attacks on us. You know the line: if Americans were not in Iraq or Afghanistan, we would not have detonated this car bomb at this funeral, in the marketplace, at the mosque, etc.

Immanuel Kant would say that it is your duty to ensure ethical and moral conduct in this war. Kant would have us treat people as ends, not means—the essence of the ethics of respect. Indeed, today's wars are contests for the trust and allegiance of the people. Moral and ethical conduct despite the brutality of this enemy will permit us to defeat enemies whose primary sources of strength are coercion and the stoking of hatreds based on ignorance.

This might sound a bit theoretical to you, so I would like to talk to you about your specific components of ensuring moral and ethical conduct despite the uncertain, complex, and dangerous environments in which our forces are operating.

Breakdowns in discipline that result in immoral or unethical conduct in war can often be traced to four factors. (If you are looking for a case study that illuminates these factors, I recommend that you read Jim Frederick's recently published *Black Hearts*).\*

- *Ignorance*—concerning the mission or the environment or a failure to understand or internalize the warrior ethos or professional military ethic. This results in the breaking of the covenant, the sacred trust that binds soldiers to our society and to each other.
- *Uncertainty*. Ignorance causes uncertainty, and uncertainty can lead to mistakes, mistakes that can harm civilians unnecessarily. Warfare will always remain firmly in the realm of uncertainty, but leaders must strive to reduce uncertainty for their troopers and units.
- *Fear*. Uncertainty combines with the persistent danger inherent in combat to instill fear in individuals and units. Leaders must strive not only to reduce uncertainty for their troopers but also to build confident units.

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\* Jim Frederick, *Black Hearts: One Platoon's Descent into Madness in Iraq's Triangle of Death* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010).

Confidence serves as a bulwark against fear and fear's corrosive effect on morale, discipline, and combat effectiveness.

- *Combat trauma.* Rage is often a result of combat trauma. Fear experienced over time or in a traumatic experience can lead to combat trauma, and combat trauma often manifests itself in rage and actions that compromise the mission.

The counterinsurgency manual recognizes that ensuring moral conduct during counterinsurgency operations is particularly difficult, because “the environment that fosters insurgency is characterized by violence, immorality, distrust, and deceit.” The COIN manual directs leaders to “work proactively to establish and maintain the proper ethical climate of their organizations” and to “ensure that the trying counterinsurgency environment does not undermine the values of their Soldiers and Marines.” Soldiers and marines “must remain faithful to basic American, Army, and Marine Corps standards of proper behavior and respect for the sanctity of life.”\* To inoculate soldiers and units against the four aforementioned causes of moral and ethical breakdowns, leaders should make a concerted effort in four areas:

- Applied ethics or values-based instruction
- Training that replicates as closely as possible situations that soldiers are likely to encounter
- Education about cultures and historical experiences of the peoples among whom the wars are being fought
- Leadership that strives to set the example, keep soldiers informed, and manage combat stress.

### *Applied Ethics and Values-Based Instruction*

Our Army's values aim, in part, to inform soldiers about the covenant between them, our institution, and society.<sup>†</sup> The service's seven values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage are consistent with Aristotelian virtue as well as the ancient philosophy of Cicero and the modern philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It is easy, for example, to identify the similarity

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\* COIN manual, p. 7-1.

<sup>†</sup> For the Army values, see “Soldier Life: Being a Soldier,” Goarmy.com. For comprehensive analyses of the Army profession and military ethics, see Don Snider and Lloyd Mathews, eds., *The Future of the Army Profession*, 2nd ed., rev. and exp. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005). The counterinsurgency manual states that “the Nation's and the profession's values are not negotiable,” also that “violations of them are not just mistakes; they are failures in meeting the fundamental standards of the profession of arms.” COIN manual, p. 7-1.

between the Army's definition of respect as beginning "with a fundamental understanding that all people possess worth as human beings" and Cicero's exhortation in *On Duties* that "we must exercise a respectfulness towards men, both towards the best of them and also towards the rest."<sup>\*</sup> The U.S. Army's values have obvious implications for moral conduct in counterinsurgency, especially in connection with the treatment of civilians and captured enemy.

Applied ethics indoctrination for new soldiers is perhaps even more important today than in the past, because of the need to differentiate between societal and military professional views on the use of violence. In much of the media to which young soldiers are exposed—such as action films, video games, and "gangsta rap" music—violence appears justifiable as a means of advancing personal interests or demonstrating individual prowess.<sup>†</sup> In contrast, the law of war, like the military's code of honor, justifies violence only against combatants.

A way to offset or counter this societal pressure is found in the collective nature of Army ethics training. This is immensely important. Soldiers must understand that our Army and their fellow soldiers expect them to exhibit a higher sense of honor than that to which they are exposed in popular culture. As Christopher Coker observed, "In a world of honor the individual discovers his true identity in his roles and [that] to turn away from the roles is to turn away from oneself."<sup>‡</sup> Particularly important is the soldier's recognition that he or she is expected to take risks and make sacrifices to accomplish the mission, protect fellow soldiers, or safeguard innocents. Use of force that reduces risk to the soldier but places either the mission or innocents at risk must be seen as inconsistent with the military's code of honor and professional ethic.<sup>§</sup>

Values education can ring hollow unless it is pursued in a way that provides context and demonstrates relevance. While we emphasize ethical behavior as an end, we must also stress the utilitarian basis for sustaining the highest moral standards. Showing soldiers the enemy's propaganda helps emphasize the importance of ethical behavior in countering disinformation. Respectful treatment, addressing grievances, and building trust with the population ought to be

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<sup>\*</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. and trans. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 39.

<sup>†</sup> Coker, *The Warrior Ethos*, p. 92.

<sup>‡</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>§</sup> Don M. Snider, John A. Nagl, and Tony Pfaff, *Army Professionalism, the Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21st Century* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, December 1999), available at [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/).



viewed as essential means toward achieving success in counterinsurgency operations.

Historical examples and case studies of how excesses or abuse in the pursuit of tactical expediency have corrupted the moral character of units and undermined strategic objectives are particularly poignant. You might consider using films like *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) to inspire discussions on topics such as torture, insurgent strategy, terrorist tactics, and propaganda.

### *Training*

Applied ethics education, however, cannot steel soldiers and units against the disintegration that can occur under the stress of combat. Training our new troopers and integrating them into cohesive, confident teams must be your first priority as leaders. Tough realistic training builds confidence and cohesion that serve as “psychological protection” and bulwarks against fear and psychological stress in battle. As Keegan observed, much of the stress that soldiers experience in combat stems from “uncertainty and doubt.” Training endeavors to replicate the conditions of combat as closely as possible and to reduce thereby soldiers’ uncertainty about the situations they are likely to encounter.

Units experiencing the confusion and intensity of battle for the first time in actual combat are susceptible to fear. Fear can cause inaction or, in a counterinsurgency environment, might lead to an overreaction that harms innocents and undermines the counterinsurgent’s mission. In her book *Stoic Warriors*, Nancy Sherman quotes Seneca to emphasize the importance of training as a form of “bulletproofing” soldiers against the debilitating effects of fear and combat stress: “A large part of the evil consists in its novelty,” but “if evil has been pondered beforehand the blow is gentle when it comes.”\* We must base training scenarios directly on recent experiences of units in Afghanistan or Iraq and conduct training consistent with Aristotle’s observation that virtues are formed by repetition. Repetitive training under challenging and realistic conditions prepares units to respond immediately and together to encounters with the enemy, using battle drills—rehearsed responses to a predictable set of circumstances. Demonstrating their ability to fight and operate together as a team will build the confidence and cohesion necessary to suppress fear and help soldiers and units cope with combat stress while preserving their professionalism and moral character.

Soldiers trained exclusively for conventional combat operations may be predisposed toward responding with all available firepower upon contact with the enemy. Such a reaction in a counterinsurgency environment, however, might

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\* Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), p. 117.

result in the unnecessary loss of innocent life and run counter to the overall aim of operations. In training, we should still evaluate units on their ability to overwhelm the enemy but also evaluate them on how well they protect innocents and apply firepower with discipline and discrimination.

Our training should include civilian role-players to replicate as closely as possible the ethnic, religious, and tribal landscapes of the areas in which units will operate. As in Iraq and Afghanistan, the enemy in these exercises blends into the population. When role players are not available, cultural experts should train soldiers to play the role of civilians while their fellow soldiers are trained and evaluated. Using soldiers as civilian role-players has a secondary benefit: it is very useful for soldiers to view their own force from the perspective of the civilian population. Exercises that include civilian role-players help soldiers understand better the importance of restraint and respectful, professional conduct. Role players and soldiers come together at the end of the exercise for an “after-action review” to identify lessons and consider how the unit might apply those lessons to future training and operations.

### *Cultural and Historical Training*

Because unfamiliarity with cultures can compound the stress associated with physical danger, ensuring that soldiers are familiar with the history and culture of the region in which they are operating is critical for sustaining combat effectiveness and promoting respectful treatment of the population. Use professional reading programs; discuss books and articles with your soldiers. Use lectures and film. Excellent documentaries are available on the history of Islam, as well as on the history of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Cultural training has practical applications. An understanding of ethnic, cultural, and tribal dynamics allows soldiers to evaluate sources of information and anticipate potential consequences of their actions. Leaders who have a basic understanding of history and culture can also recognize and counter the enemy’s misrepresentation of history for propaganda purposes.

Perhaps most important, education and training that include history and culture promote moral conduct by generating empathy for the population. The COIN manual describes “genuine compassion and empathy for the populace” as an “effective weapon against insurgents.”\* If soldiers understand the population’s experience, feelings of confusion and frustration might be supplanted by concern and compassion. As Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius observed, “Respect becomes concrete through empathy.” Cicero reminds us that a soldier’s respect must extend to the enemy and civilians: “We

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\* COIN manual, p. 7-2.

ought to revere, to guard and to preserve the common affection and fellowship of the whole of humankind.”

Leaders must also learn history to evaluate themselves and place contemporary operations in the context of previous experience. Examining previous counterinsurgency experiences allows leaders to ask questions about contemporary missions, avoid some of the mistakes of the past, recognize opportunities, and identify effective techniques.

A critical examination of history also allows soldiers to understand the fundamentals of counterinsurgency theory and thereby equips them to make better decisions in what are highly decentralized operations. Soldiers need to recognize that the population must be the focus of the counterinsurgent’s effort and that the population’s perceptions—of their government, the counterinsurgent forces, and the insurgents—are of paramount importance. This highlights the need for soldiers to treat the population respectfully and to clarify their intentions through their deeds and conduct.

While it is important that all soldiers possess basic cultural knowledge, it is also important that leaders and units have access to cultural expertise. Soldiers often share what they learn with other members of their team. So sending even just a few soldiers from each platoon or company to language or cultural training can have a broad positive effect on the organization. In a counterinsurgency environment, cultural expertise, such as “human terrain teams,” can help units distinguish between reconcilable and irreconcilable groups through an analysis of each group’s fears and aspirations.\*

Ultimately, the counterinsurgent hopes to reduce violence and achieve enduring security by mediating between factions that are willing to resolve differences through politics rather than violence.† Cultural expertise contributes to the ethical conduct of war by helping soldiers and units understand their environment. This richer understanding can help them determine how to apply force discriminately and to identify opportunities to resolve conflict, short of force.

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\* Teams of regional experts, linguists, and area-studies specialists, such as anthropologists (military and civilian), embedded at the brigade level to advise the command. See *Human Terrain System*, [hts.army.mil/](https://hts.army.mil/).

† Education in negotiation and mediation techniques represents a gap in leaders’ education that can be filled with self-study until the military begins to incorporate this instruction into its formal education programs. For relevant work conducted in this area by the Harvard Negotiation Project, see *Program of Negotiation at Harvard Law School*, [www.pon.harvard.edu/](http://www.pon.harvard.edu/). For a book useful in connection with preparing for negotiation and mediation in a counterinsurgency environment, see Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro, *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate* (New York: Viking, 2005).

### *Combat Stress*

Education or indoctrination in professional military ethics and tough, realistic training are important. However, they are insufficient to preserve moral character under the intense emotional and psychological pressures of combat. Soldiers and units must also be prepared to cope with the stress of continuous operations in a counterinsurgency environment; combat stress often leads to unprofessional or immoral behavior.\*

Counterinsurgency operations can be even more stressful than more conventional wars. Control of stress is a command responsibility. Leaders must be familiar with grief counseling and “grief work.” Grieving our losses must be valued, not stigmatized. Understand how to “communalize” grief so units can get through difficult times together.

Watch soldier behavior carefully to identify warning signs. These include social disconnection, distractibility, suspiciousness toward friends, irrationality, and inconsistency. If units experience losses, get them combat-stress counseling. Watch for soldiers who become “revenge driven,” as they can break down the discipline of the unit and do significant damage to the mission and their fellow troopers. Commitment to fellow troopers and mission must be the motivating factor in battle—not rage.

Additionally, soldiers’ knowledge that they have behaved in a professional, disciplined, moral manner when confronting the enemy is one of the most important factors in preventing post-traumatic stress and various dysfunctions that come with it. Developing and maintaining unit cohesion is critical in preventing disorders associated with combat stress and combat trauma. As Jonathan Shay notes, “What a returning soldier needs most when leaving war is not a mental health professional but a living community to whom his experience matters.”

Military education is thin on the psychological dynamics of combat, perhaps because its importance becomes obvious only in wartime. You might read and discuss such books as J. Glenn Gray’s *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (Bison Books, 1998), Jonathan Shay’s *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (Simon and Schuster, 1995), and David Grossman and Loren Christensen’s *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace* (Warrior Science, 3rd ed., 2008).

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\* Evidence for this conclusion comes from the business world. A 1997 survey on the “Sources and Consequences of Workplace Pressure,” for instance, found that workers responded to workplace pressure by resorting to unethical behavior—for instance, “cutting corners on quality control, engaging in insider trading, falsifying reports, accepting kickbacks, and having an affair with a business associate.” Edward S. Petry, Amanda E. Mujica, and Dianne M. Vickery, “Sources and Consequences of Workplace Pressure: Increasing the Risk of Unethical and Illegal Business Practices,” *Business and Society Review* 99, no. 1 (2003), p. 26.

### *Leadership*

Common to all of these efforts to preserve the moral character of soldiers and units is leadership. Lack of effective leadership has often caused combat trauma. Sun Tzu had it right 2,500 years ago, in his classic *The Art of War*—“Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and sternness.” Humaneness in the face of the ambiguous and difficult situations we are facing today and will face tomorrow will permit soldiers to remain psychologically ready, and it must be an area that our leaders focus on. Sternness involves ensuring that leaders are in positions of leadership. Emphasize leader development but do not hesitate to remove those who do not enjoy the trust or confidence of their troopers.

Effective communication is vital. Explain to troopers the importance of their mission (the stakes) and make sure that they understand the higher commander’s intent and concept for defeating the enemy and accomplishing the mission. A key part of the psychological well-being of soldiers is a sense of agency, or control; preserving discipline and moral conduct in combat depends in large measure on it.\* It is vital that troopers understand how the risks they take and sacrifices they make contribute to the achievement of objectives worthy of those risks and sacrifices. Ultimately, positive feedback in the form of success in combat reinforces ethical and moral conduct.

Senior commanders must establish the right climate and send a simple, clear message continuously to their troopers: “Every time you treat a civilian disrespectfully, you are working for the enemy.” It is, however, junior officers and noncommissioned officers who will enforce standards of moral conduct. Preparing leaders at the squad, platoon, and company levels for that responsibility is vitally important.

In *Black Hearts*, a headquarters company commander commenting on the cause of the horrible rape and murder of civilians south of Baghdad said the following: “Clearly a lot of what happened can be attributed to a leadership failure. And I’m not talking about just at the platoon level. I’m talking about platoon, company, battalion. Even I feel in some way indirectly responsible for what happened out there. I mean, we were all part of the team. We just let it go. And we let it go, and go, and go. . . . We failed those guys by letting them be out there like that without a plan.”

It is the warrior ethos that permits soldiers to see themselves “as part of an ongoing historical community,” a community that sustains itself through “sacred trust” and a covenant that binds them to one another and to the society they

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\* Sherman, *Stoic Warriors*, p. 126.

serve. The warrior ethos forms the basis for this covenant. It is composed of such values as honor, duty, courage, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. The warrior ethos is important because it makes military units effective and because it makes war “less inhumane.”

As our commander in chief observed in Oslo, “Make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world.” Your advice and leadership will help our forces remain true to our values as we fight brutal and murderous enemies who pose a grave threat to all civilized people. I am proud to serve alongside you. My thanks to you and your families for your invaluable service to our nation in time of war.

BRIGADIER GENERAL H. R. MCMASTER, USA

*Brigadier General McMaster, well-known for his 1998 book Dereliction of Duty, has, since its appearance, commanded 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (in combat in Iraq), serving also on the U.S. Central Command Staff, at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and in U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He is now serving on the staff of Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan.*





*Rear Admiral James “Phil” Wisecup became the fifty-second President of the U.S. Naval War College on 6 November 2008. He most recently served as Commander, Carrier Strike Group 7 (Ronald Reagan Strike Group), returning from deployment in October 2008.*

*A 1977 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Rear Admiral Wisecup earned his master’s degree in international relations from the University of Southern California, graduated from the Naval War College in 1998, and also earned a degree from the University of Strasbourg, France, as an Olmsted Scholar, in 1982.*

*At sea, he served as executive officer of USS Valley Forge (CG 50) during Operation DESERT STORM. As Commanding Officer, USS Callaghan (DDG 994), he was awarded the Vice Admiral James Stockdale Award for Inspirational Leadership. He served as Commander, Destroyer Squadron 21 during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM after 9/11.*

*Ashore, he was assigned to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium; served as Force Planner and Ship Scheduler for Commander, U.S. Naval Surface Forces, Pacific; and served as action officer for Navy Headquarters Plans/Policy Staff. He served as a fellow on the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group; as Director, White House Situation Room; and as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea.*

*Rear Admiral Wisecup’s awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and various unit, service, and campaign awards.*

## PRESIDENT'S FORUM

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*What Will Be Asked of Our Navy? Some Reflections on  
“What It All Means”*

A RECENT ARTICLE IN *FORBES* by Steve Cohen discusses the future of aircraft carriers in the larger context of maritime security and argues, even more important, that the American public seems uninterested in what is happening in the Navy generally.<sup>1</sup> Jim Bencivenga recently addressed in the *Christian Science Monitor* the impact the state of the economy will have on future naval forces.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Dr. Hew Strachan has written about civil-military relations and grand strategy.<sup>3</sup>

The interesting thing is that these three articles have appeared within days of each other, in three very different venues, none of them particularly “naval” publications. Here in Newport at the Naval War College—a place chartered for the past 125 years to think about these issues—it is very interesting and gratifying that journalists are beginning to write about naval issues and that Dr. Strachan, who has frequently visited us here, is addressing the state of civil-military relations and their relevance to strategy and operations. These issues are right in our “sweet spot,” and we have had some very interesting conferences, games, and discussions dealing directly with such questions. By the time this goes to print, Robert Kaplan will have spoken to us about his view of the future. Kaplan has sailed with Navy folks and written widely about his experiences.<sup>4</sup>

Though we are very conscious of the dangers of trying to predict the future, all these articles are highly relevant and related to work we’re doing here in Newport. Discussion of naval issues like these will soon become important to our leadership as it attempts not only to understand but to explain the importance and relevance of the U.S. Navy and sea power to the American people in the post-Iraq and -Afghanistan future.

In his recent guidance to the service, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead, has put his finger right on the pulse: “I see continued disorder in the global security environment, a slow economic recovery, and increasing demand on our Navy.”<sup>5</sup> To me, as I look out from Newport, the global security environment seems as unsettled as I’ve ever seen it. That has driven us here to a very interesting series of games, workshops, and conferences to try to capture a sense of the complexity of issues that will face the Navy and our nation in the future.

Speaking of complexity and history, I am frequently asked, “Admiral, what are you reading?” Just now, my faculty has me reading *A Distant Mirror*, by Barbara Tuchman, and *Before European Hegemony*, by Janet Abu-Lughod.<sup>6</sup> Both books concern the era leading up to a major “decompression” in the fourteenth-century Europe. I have learned a lesson from these important works, which focus on the life of that time. It is a lesson (it may sound like Yogi Berra) reinforced during my discussions with the faculty here—that is, what we know happened, happened. It is history. We have been here before. It is not speculation.

In the case of medieval Europe, there may be differences in interpretation, but there is very little disagreement on the facts—there was no *deus ex machina* but a combination of factors that led to major problems. Professor Abu-Lughod says, “In the case of the decline of Bruges and Ghent[, for example, there were] natural, epidemic, political, and economic [factors,] and it is hard to see how ‘policy’ could have averted any of them.”<sup>7</sup> That is the “lesson of Flanders,” that no one thing but a combination of things led to the decline—bank failures, wars, twenty-five million deaths from the plague, and finally the silting up of the port of Bruges.

I would contend there are major forces like that at work today and that, to use the words of Mark Twain, though history doesn’t necessarily repeat itself, it does rhyme. In an unpublished brief I saw in June 2009, a professor at the Swedish National Defense College, Tomas Ries, made the point this way. Sixty-five percent of the world’s population, he argues, finds itself today in a “Zone of Misery,” trapped by history, culture, climate, and resources; 19 percent is in the “Global Business Elite/Flow World” of “elite transnational corporations, globalized democracies, and societies in rapid transition,” which would likely fight each other only if flows were disrupted; the rest of the world’s population lives on the borderline between them, in the “Zone of Revolution,” with potential for positive transition—but then again, maybe not. Some similar ideas have been advanced by the American commentator, historian, and activist Mike Davis.<sup>8</sup> Dr. Mike Vlahos of the Naval War College is asking a series of questions about weather events, the health of the oceans, freshwater, networks and networked systems (think oil or utilities distribution networks), and panics, and whether crisis

encourages competition and conflict or cooperation.<sup>9</sup> He asks whether mind-altering events (say, a pandemic or some other devastating world event) shock us into new things. Is there a civilizational tipping point, when we can only say, "It's all over now, we must look to ourselves"? What would a serious pandemic do to our understanding of civilization? Can we mobilize before it's too late? Think about it. The Spanish flu pandemic in 1918 resulted in over twenty million deaths, and that was before today's extensive land, sea, and air transportation network existed. This is one of the main reasons, in fact, that we asked Max Brooks, a writer of science fiction, recently of *World War Z*, to visit us here.<sup>10</sup>

I am a serving Navy flag officer, so I will stick to what I know. I'm no pessimist, but as President of the Naval War College, I get paid to look at these hard questions. We try here to get our minds around big events, to make sense of what might happen in the future, and we can "game" such things—we've been doing that in Newport for over a hundred years. We conducted a large and extended game here back in 2006, in conjunction with the development of "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower" (CS21), which examined such issues. In that game, we found that almost all nations, including those in the "Zone of Revolution," have a stake in the effective functioning of the global system of commerce and security. This finding heavily influenced CS21 development, because it's clear that we in the United States are generally part of what Tomas Ries would call the "flow world" and therefore, as a nation, we (at least, many of us in the U.S. Navy) generally feel responsible for preserving this global system—along with other nations of the world and their navies, though each will also work toward what is in its own national interest.<sup>11</sup>

The naval services, like a control system (in the technological sense), work silently, and most of the time invisibly, to keep things moving safely around the world and to intervene when there is flow disruption. We are seeing such disruptions now in the Gulf of Aden, we have seen them previously in the area of the Strait of Malacca, and we could see them in the South China Sea, for example, or potentially in any number of other areas.

During three conferences here in Newport over the past eighteen months we listened to people whose names you'd recognize talk about "irregular warfare"—in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Chechnya, for example. Many of our readers are certainly familiar with these operations and have been in these places or know people who have. This kind of warfare is what we're doing now, today, and could be doing for the foreseeable future. But one of the conference participants asked me, "Admiral, are you gaming climate change"? I pressed him as to what he had in mind. What if, he asked, the oceans were to rise and flood a country entirely? Who would help the people? And if their neighbors didn't want

them, “What do you do with them?” he asked. What indeed? And *who* would do it? Finding the answer is not rocket science; the countries with this level of capability make a pretty short list.

About a year ago, in the fall of 2009, we cosponsored with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution a conference called “Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change.” As Admiral Thad Allen (who retired in May 2010 as Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard) likes to say, no matter what you think about global warming, there is now water in places where before there was ice, and the Navy and Coast Guard have to deal with that. We had government officials and academics from China visit here to talk about military activities in the exclusive economic zone in 2009, and earlier this year we hosted such a group to discuss nontraditional security challenges for the maritime domain. We had a conference in December 2009 to discuss the science of climate change, civilizational evolution, energy and raw materials, and what they mean to the Navy. We’re thinking a lot about how these complex issues might evolve over time.

Lieutenant General Bill Caldwell showed us, when he recently visited here, a popular Web video in which speakers say, “We live in exponential times.”<sup>12</sup> I think there is a lot of truth in that. The video ends with the question, “What does it all mean?” They might well ask. One of the speakers at our Current Strategy Forum in June 2009 told us that we have historically been very bad at trying to predict the future. In fact, we have almost always gotten it wrong, and so we should expect to be surprised, expect the unexpected. Here in Newport we’re simply trying to anticipate, to stay ahead—simply put, to get the feel of the national zeitgeist.

Yet none of this alters the fact that over my thirty-three years of service as a destroyer officer, the geopolitical environment has slowly but surely been changing, for a multitude of reasons. Rear Admiral Bradley Fiske wrote in 1916 with an almost mathematical precision about how fleets work, trying to engineer war with some kind of precision.<sup>13</sup> However, even Fiske realized that there was still as much art as science in military operations. Think about the recent conflict in Sri Lanka. It might be an easy leap to say, here is what things will be like in future “conventional war”: it’s still about getting ordnance on target, though the narrative in that case, so important in all insurgencies, meant that Sri Lanka’s fight was not a pure “Leyte Gulf-style” slugfest, force on force—in the *old style*.

OK, Admiral, you might ask, so what?

In the U.S. Navy, we like to think our skill level is very high; the fact is, however, that we cannot be complacent. The Navy has essentially not been challenged at sea since 1945. The last time its ships fired missiles at other warships was in 1988, during Operation PRAYING MANTIS.<sup>14</sup> In DESERT STORM, I was

executive officer of a cruiser, USS *Valley Forge* (CG 50), and I know we were ready. We operated in the minefields of the northern Gulf as our air controllers vectored dozens of aircraft onto what became known as the “highway of death.” At sea, however, there were only minor patrol-boat actions, which were handled primarily by armed strike-reconnaissance aircraft and Royal Navy armed helicopters.

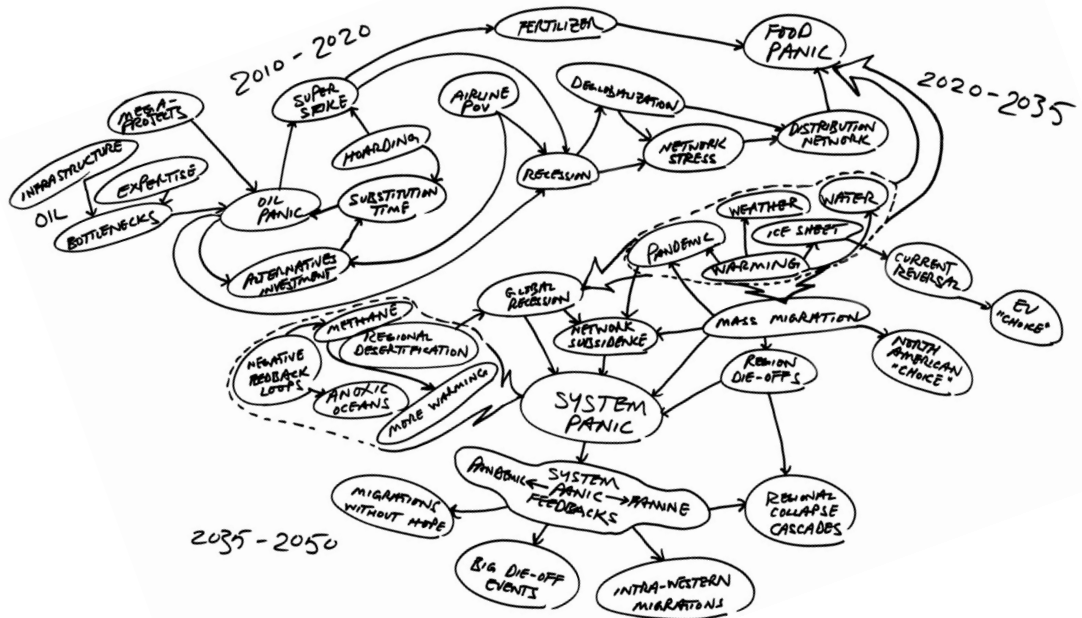
That said, as for what we would in the Navy call “conventional war”—power projection, massive fleet action—could it happen again? Any naval officer serving in the western Pacific within the past few years will tell you we’d be fools to assume it couldn’t. We certainly are thinking about it, and others in the Asian neighborhood are too. It’s part of the daily decision calculus, both in the U.S. Navy and in the capitals of potential adversaries. We’re not complacent. But as my gamers tell me, not having been tested for the past twenty years or more does not equal dominance, as the Royal Navy found out at Jutland in the First World War, over a hundred years after its last real fleet action, at Trafalgar. Neither, however, is any particular outcome preordained.

If you don’t think that Clausewitz had it right when he postulated that war is “more than a chameleon,” just ask the master of M/V *Maersk Alabama* or, perhaps, the master of USNS *Impeccable*. Is piracy in the Gulf of Aden a form of war? It may, for now, look more like crime and lawlessness, but if you do nothing, you get the “broken-window effect” we saw applied in New York City (which supposed that unless you repair each broken window, people will get the wrong signal and things will get worse, that criminals left to go about their business unchecked tend to get bolder and more brazen). What about war on networks? When does a denial of Internet service become an act of war? It seems to me that a serious global depression could lead to conflicts in new arenas, some of them unlikely areas that would be surprising to many Americans. How do we more precisely understand the complex synergy of feedback loops as we monitor the world’s environment? (Think Greenland, where Woods Hole is doing very good work.)<sup>15</sup> Do we understand triggers and tipping points and their synergy?

Think about countries:

- Without energy or freshwater (desertification) as distribution networks are disrupted and prices shoot through the roof
- Without food, as production and distribution networks are disrupted
- Without proper medical care, as millions die from a global pandemic
- Without governance, resources, or trade in a prolonged economic crisis
- Failed states without alternatives, in low-lying areas at the mercy of weather, as temperatures and the level of the ocean rise.<sup>16</sup>





Dr. Vlahos has made a sketch that vividly suggests the complexity of all this.<sup>17</sup>

What will be asked of naval forces in such a future?

You could make the case that the U.S. Navy has become a feature of the world-wide strategic environment and that a lot could be asked of it in such a world, if even only some of these points are ever in play. Think about “gaming climate change”—it could mean humanitarian evacuation under combat conditions or noncombatant evacuations in a desperate, violent environment like Somalia, or Lebanon of recent years. As an example, I lived in South Korea for two years recently, and it was clear to us in Seoul that the Seventh Fleet, along with the U.S. global logistics infrastructure is a part of the landscape, and “assumed.” The Seventh Fleet is both part of the decision calculus of potential adversaries (and thereby a deterrent, which is good) and a policy tool, to show support for our allies.

It has become clear to me since arriving in Newport that investment in the education of our commanders will be essential in the twenty-first century if they are to have the tools they will need to deal with these challenges.<sup>18</sup> We can’t, and don’t, just assume that “conventional war” would be a repeat of World War II. The interesting thing is that this complexity and difficulty don’t necessarily imply any particular outcome in a conflict between great powers. Janet Abu-Lughod explicitly shows that none of the current “received wisdom” about how unified Europe has come to be today was preordained. The wheels could have

come off at any point, and sometimes they did and for a variety of reasons—twice in a big way in the twentieth century. It's our job here in Newport to make sure we can anticipate, and that the wheels stay on, as far as we can help it.



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#### NOTES

1. Steve Cohen, "Where Are the Carriers?" *Admissions* (blog), *Forbes*, [blogs.forbes.com/](http://blogs.forbes.com/). This is certainly not a new issue. Dr. Mike Vlahos was writing about the viability of "capital ships" as early as 1979; see Michael Vlahos, "A Crack in the Shield," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 2, no. 1 (May 1979), pp. 47–82.
2. Jim Bencivenga, "Will US Naval Power Sink?" (opinion), *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 October 2010, [www.csmonitor.com/](http://www.csmonitor.com/). Bencivenga addresses what he calls the "sleeper issue of the midterm election."
3. Hew Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," *Survival* 52, no. 5 (October 2010), pp. 157–82, available at [www.informaworld.com](http://www.informaworld.com).
4. See Robert D. Kaplan, *Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts: The American Military in the Air, at Sea, and on the Ground* (New York: Random House, 2007). Kaplan's newest book is *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010).
5. U.S. Navy Dept., *CNO Guidance for 2011: Executing the Maritime Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: October 2010), p. 1, available at [www.navy.mil/](http://www.navy.mil/).
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7. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, p. 95.
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12. Scott MacLeod, "Did You Know 3.0," video, 2008 latest edition, [www.metacafe.com](http://www.metacafe.com). Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, U.S. Army, is Commander, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan, and Commanding General, Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan.
13. Bradley A. Fiske, *The Navy as a Fighting Machine* (New York: Scribner's, 1916).
14. See Craig L. Symonds, *Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles That Shaped American History* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005). This book is the only source I know, except for official reports, where the story can be found.
15. "Getting to the Bottom of the Greenland Ice Sheet," *Oceanus* 47, no. 2 (October 2009), pp. 24–29.
16. Michael Vlahos, unpublished paper, May 2010.

17. The graphic describes a notional crisis of globalization as it might develop over the next forty years. It is not intended to be a model. Rather it tells a story: it is a scenario. A better explanation of this drawing is expected soon in U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*.
18. U.S. House of Representatives, *Testimony, Williamson Murray, Subcommittee on Professional Military Education*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., 10 September 2009, available at [armedservices.house.gov/](http://armedservices.house.gov/).



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# CAPTAINS OF THE SOUL

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## **Stoic Philosophy and the Western Profession of Arms in the Twenty-first Century**

*Michael Evans*

*To meet life as a powerful conqueror,  
No fumes, no ennui, no more complaints or scornful criticisms,  
To these proud laws of the air, the water, and the ground,  
Proving my interior soul impregnable,  
And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me.*

WALT WHITMAN, "A SONG OF JOYS" (1860)

**I**n the new millennium Western militaries are spending a great deal of their resources on training and arming uniformed professionals for the instrumental rigors of operational service. Most modern armed forces equip their personnel with the latest body armor, the best protected vehicles, and the most sophisticated counterexplosive electronics, acquiring as well the most advanced medical services for those physically wounded or maimed. Much less time is devoted to providing military personnel with existential or inner armaments—with the mental armor and philosophical protection—that is necessary to confront an asymmetric enemy who abides by a different set of cultural rules. Much is also made in today's Western political and military circles about the need to relearn counterinsurgency, with its central tenet of winning "hearts and minds" among contested populations. Yet comparatively little is done to provide Western military professionals with sufficient moral philosophy to protect their own hearts and minds against the rigors of contemporary warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is true that all English-speaking Western militaries possess codes of behavior that govern the ethical conduct of their members. These codes tend to cover the law of armed conflict, just-war theory, and the importance of upholding humanitarian values. However, such guides, while essential, tend to be rooted in social science, law, and psychology rather than in moral philosophy, with its grounding in the great humanities.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, while modern ethical codes emphasize institutional rules of behavior, moral philosophy puts in the foreground

the development of personal character and the reconciliation of the individual to the social environment in which he or she operates. Ethics need, therefore, to be complemented by a stronger focus on philosophy that permits the professional military to become fully a self-conscious moral community committed to maintaining traditions essential to the integrity of its people and the discharge of its responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

This article analyzes the importance of teaching Stoic moral philosophy within today's armed forces, covering three areas. First, the article examines the challenge to the warrior ethos emanating from the increasing postmodern instrumentalism of warfare. Second, it examines the case for upholding in the professional military a moral philosophy that is based on adapting what the British philosopher Bertrand Russell once called the virtues of "Stoic self-command."<sup>3</sup> Third, the article discusses the extent to which philosophical values based on Stoicism might serve as moral guides to today's military professionals, by drawing on lessons and choices from Western literature, politics, and history.

#### **THE CHALLENGE TO THE WESTERN MILITARY ETHOS: POSTMODERNITY, TECHNOLOGICAL INSTRUMENTALISM, AND HONOR**

Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, the editors of an influential 2000 work, argued that advanced Western armed forces were undergoing an uneven, but clearly discernible, transition from modern to postmodern status.<sup>4</sup> This transition, they suggested, was challenging to the professional military ethos, for two overarching reasons. First, a loosening of ties to both society and state was occurring, symbolized by the rise of a moral relativism in which "there is a shrinking consensus about what values constitute the public good, and little confidence that we know how, by the use of reason, to determine what the public good might be."<sup>5</sup> Second, the rise of "revolution in military affairs" technologies based on the instrumental technology of precision and stealth pitted, they suggested, the ethos of professionalism against a growing occupational outlook.<sup>6</sup> John Allen Williams, in his contribution to their volume, went so far as to conclude that "military culture is challenged by a relativistic civilian ethos from without and by the increasing civilianization of military functions and personnel orientation from within."<sup>7</sup>

Over the last decade, Christopher Coker, perhaps the world's leading philosopher of contemporary war, has in a series of important studies further analyzed the implications for the military profession of the onset of postmodernity.<sup>8</sup> For Coker, much of the contemporary West today is dominated by what he calls an "ethics without morality," in which the existential and metaphysical ideals that have traditionally underpinned a life dedicated to military professionalism seem



increasingly obsolescent.<sup>9</sup> Despite the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Coker believes, postmodern trends in operational practice and advanced technology are now so deeply entrenched in contemporary modes of warfare “that in the future there will be no place for the warrior ideal.”<sup>10</sup> In a pessimistic tone he writes:

Even the professional soldier who volunteers to fight sees war increasingly as a trade rather than as a vocation, a job like any other, even if it differs from every other in the fear and anxiety it generates. Even if that is not true of every soldier (and we produce a few warriors still), war in the early twenty-first century does indeed seem to the rest of us rather barren, bereft of that [existential] dimension that made the warrior a human type as Hegel understood the term, a man who through war perceives his own humanity.<sup>11</sup>

Other observers have written on how postmodern trends have led throughout contemporary society to an alleged decline of public honor that impacts upon the Western military’s professional ethos and its institutional notions of duty and sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> This development, it is contended, has had the effect of making Western militaries’ internal codes of honor less reflections of wider social beliefs than species of subculture. Writers such as Akbar S. Ahmed and James Bowman have charged that one of the major weaknesses in the contemporary West’s waging of wars is that its nations do so as “post-honor societies.”<sup>13</sup> In their view, a gulf has grown between the honor codes of volunteer military professionals and parent societies, the latter of which are increasingly governed by the more relativist mores of postmodernity. This gulf, it is suggested, puts Western democracies at a disadvantage when fighting opponents who are impelled by absolutist cultural imperatives based on older codes of honor.<sup>14</sup> As Coker reflects, “the West is engaged with an [Islamist] adversary that is the product of one of the world’s great unreconstructed and unreformed honour cultures at a time when the fortunes of the West’s own honour culture are at a low ebb.”<sup>15</sup>

### MORAL PHILOSOPHY FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS: THE CASE FOR REVIVING STOICISM

How does one, then, counter the rise of an instrumental vision of war and with it the growth of occupational ideals that reflect Coker’s “ethics without morality”? If there is a growing incompatibility between the norms of an evolving, postmodern era based on instrumental rationality and the values of a professional military ethos based on existential meaning, we clearly need to reinforce the philosophical inner selves of men and women in the West’s armed forces.

This article argues that one of the most effective philosophical traditions for those in military uniform is that of Stoicism. The moral philosophy of the ancient Greek and Roman Stoics as taught by such great thinkers as Epictetus, Seneca, Cicero, and Marcus Aurelius offers an effective path for those who seek to

understand the existential character of the profession of arms. Yet Stoic philosophy runs against all postmodern philosophical trends and is thus unfashionable today. As Tad Brennan comments in a 2007 book, those who seek to adhere to Stoic philosophy are likely to be seen as out of touch with their age, seeking only to cling to a jumbled-up “mixture of tough-guy bravado, hypocrisy and heartlessness [that is] neither personally compelling nor philosophically interesting.”<sup>16</sup> Why should an ancient Hellenistic philosophy noted for its harsh prescriptions and designed for life in preindustrial agrarian city-states be of any use to military professionals who have been reared in the social and material sophis-

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*As the ancient Stoic thinkers teach us, what truly counts is the nature of life itself as an unending form of warfare that must be confronted and mastered if one is to overcome fortune and fate.*

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tication of a postindustrial electronic age? The answer lies in the unchanging human dimension of the military profession, and it is this dimension—with its focus on strength of character—that links the Greek hoplites on the fields of

Attica to today’s Western soldiers in the mountains of Afghanistan.

What is most attractive about the Stoic school of philosophy is its central notion that character is fate. The ideas of Stoicism infuse much of the edifice of Western civilization, and this debt is evident in the writings of such towering intellectual figures as Montaigne, Pascal, Spinoza, Descartes, Kant, and Hume. Moreover, Stoicism in some form infuses much of Christian theology, from St. Augustine through Thomas à Kempis to the Flemish philosopher Justus Lipsius, as symbolized by the famous Serenity Prayer: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Indeed, the philosopher Charles Taylor has written of how a Christianized Stoicism, or neo-Stoicism, developed by Lipsius in the sixteenth century influenced the evolution of modern Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Catholicism—with Calvin beginning his life of religious activism by publishing a study of Seneca.<sup>17</sup> Prominent later adherents of Stoicism have included the great Prussian general Frederick the Great, the Holocaust philosopher Viktor E. Frankl, the Russian writer and dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the South African statesman Nelson Mandela.<sup>18</sup>

It is often argued that members of the armed services are natural Stoics, capable of repelling the psychic shock of combat through ingrained mental toughness. Such a belief is highly misleading, as the frequent incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder in modern military establishments in recent years attests. As the American scholar Nancy Sherman emphasizes in a 2005 study, “catastrophic, external circumstance can derail the best-lived life.”<sup>19</sup> In 2008 the RAND Corporation found that nearly 20 percent of U.S. military service

members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan reported symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression—what it called the “invisible wounds of war.”<sup>20</sup> To what extent a philosophy of Stoicism can assist those in uniform to prevent or mitigate modern neuropsychiatric disorders remains a matter of debate. As RAND researchers have pointed out, there remain “fundamental gaps” in our knowledge of the causal links between individual educational backgrounds, collective military training, and operational deployment, and the incidence of mental health problems.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, as one leading American soldier, Brigadier General H. R. McMaster, U.S. Army, has observed, cultivation of Stoic-like resilience and fortitude for self-control is likely to be of value in reducing combat stress. In McMaster’s words, “Soldiers must view war as a challenge and as their duty, not as trauma.”<sup>22</sup> This view is shared by Coker, who writes that aspiring warriors must seek “to be true to what [Ralph Waldo] Emerson calls ‘the great stoical doctrine—obey thyself.’ Nothing is more true of the warrior ethos than this doctrine.”<sup>23</sup>

For the most part, contemporary military notions of Stoicism tend to be based on secondhand platitudes and common stereotypes about manliness, “stiff upper lips,” and “can do” willingness. Popular Stoic stereotypes include the emotionless Mr. Spock in the television series *Star Trek* and Russell Crowe’s “strength and honor” Roman soldier, Maximus, in the 1999 movie *Gladiator*. Of course, there is much more to Stoic philosophy than popular culture allows. Stoicism is a school of ancient philosophy founded by the fourth century BCE by the Greek thinker Zeno of Citium and systematized by his successors Cleanthes and Chrysippus in the third century BCE. Since Zeno’s original followers met in a public portico in Athens known as the “Painted Porch” (*Stoa Poikilē*), they came to be known as Stoics, or “men of the Porch.” The Stoic doctrines that have been bequeathed to the modern world represent a powerful method of reasoning involving the rigorous cultivation of self-command, self-reliance, and moral autonomy, a system in which an individual seeks to develop character on the basis of the four cardinal virtues of courage, justice, temperance, and wisdom.<sup>24</sup>

Rigorously studied and properly applied, Stoic philosophy delivers profound insights into the challenges of military life. Peter Ryan, an Australian hero of the Second World War and author of the celebrated 1959 memoir *Fear Drive My Feet*, has written of the impact of the writings of Marcus Aurelius on his own military conduct. In it Ryan describes himself as, when coming under Japanese fire for the first time, “a shuddering mess of demoralised terror” until he recalls the teachings of Stoicism:

Then I thought of Marcus Aurelius. Hadn’t he taught me that, when Fate approached, there was no escape, but that a man would keep his grim appointment

with dignity and calm? The effect was instant; certainly I still felt great fear, but I was no longer abject. It was this recovery of self-control and self-respect . . . that preserved me through all the testing months in the [New Guinea] bush that lay ahead in 1942 and 1943.<sup>25</sup>

In recent years, the most prominent and systematic advocate of military Stoicism was the distinguished U.S. naval officer, Medal of Honor recipient, and 1992 vice presidential contender Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale, who died in 2005. Stockdale's 1995 book *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot* is one of the finest introductions to Stoicism and its meaning for the profession of arms.<sup>26</sup> Stockdale's personal embrace of Stoicism helped him to survive seven and a half years of systematic torture and solitary confinement, from 1965 until 1972, as a prisoner of the North Vietnamese in the dreaded "Hanoi Hilton." In the late 1970s, as President of the U.S. Naval War College, Stockdale introduced at Newport an innovative course, "Foundations of Moral Obligation" (widely known as "the Stockdale Course"), which was heavily influenced by Stoic thought. More than any other warrior-scholar in the English-speaking West, Stockdale disseminated the value of Stoic philosophy within the American and allied military establishments, even influencing the work of such literary figures as Tom Wolfe.<sup>27</sup> In particular, Stockdale did much to elevate the writings of the Stoic slave-philosopher Epictetus over those of Marcus Aurelius, by revealing the former's Stoic teachings in his *Enchiridion* (Handbook) as what Stockdale called "a manual for combat officers." As Stockdale puts it, in the pages of the *Enchiridion* "I had found the proper philosophy for the military arts as I practiced them. The Roman Stoics coined the formula *Vivere militare*—'Life is being a soldier.'"<sup>28</sup> Stockdale's writings remain highly relevant today; among the purposes of this article are to salute his legacy and extend it into the new millennium.

What are the central tenets of Stoicism, and how do they fit into the cosmology of the twenty-first-century military professional? As a philosophy, Stoicism teaches that life is unfair and that there is no moral economy in the human universe. Martyrs and honest men may die poor; swindlers and dishonest men may die rich. In this respect, the fate of both the Old Testament's Job, God's good servant, and of Shakespeare's King Lear, the exemplary father, are reminders of what we must endure from a life that fits the Stoic creed. The spirit of Stoicism as an unrelenting struggle for virtuous character in a world devoid of fairness is hauntingly captured by the Greek playwright Aeschylus in his *Agamemnon*: "He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop on the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."<sup>29</sup>

The absence of a moral economy outside of the workings of our inner selves means that in the Stoic catechism there is no such category as "victimhood."

Stoicism is thus about empowerment by perception—a cultivation of an invincibility of the will by minimizing personal vulnerability through a mixture of Socratic self-examination and control of the emotions. Stoicism teaches concentration on what individuals can control—what French scholar Pierre Hadot, in his study of Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations*, calls the cultivation of the “inner citadel” of the soul.<sup>30</sup> Stoicism’s four great teachings may be summarized as the quest for virtue, as representing the sole human good; the understanding that external goods do not equate to human happiness; the belief that a good life strives to control emotions to enhance reason; and the conviction that virtue consists in knowing what is in one’s control and what is not.<sup>31</sup>

### *The Quest for Virtue as the Sole Human Good*

For the Stoic, character is formed by freedom of personal choice. Stoicism is thus a formula for maintaining self-respect and dignity through the conscious pursuit of virtue and the avoidance of vice, in times of either adversity or prosperity. The realities of poverty and wealth matter only insofar as they are used to shape the essential goodness of our character. As Epictetus puts it in the *Enchiridion*, true wealth stems from righteousness, honor, and decency, viewed collectively as absolute virtue. Such virtue is wholly indifferent to all matters of mere fortune, including health and illness, wealth and poverty, even life and death. It is a message of wisdom that has echoed across the centuries. In the twentieth century, the French philosopher Simone Weil echoed Epictetus when she wrote that authentic human greatness is always found in virtue and honor manifested in a “desire for the truth, ceaseless effort to achieve it, and obedience to one’s calling.”<sup>32</sup> Stoics firmly reject the notion of collective or social guilt as a force in shaping virtue. For the Stoic, collective guilt is an impossible proposition, simply because guilt is always about individual choice and personal wrongdoing, “even in dreams, in drunkenness and in melancholy madness.”<sup>33</sup> No one can ever be guilty for the act of another, and no society can be held accountable for the actions of individuals of a previous generation.

### *Externals Do Not Amount to Happiness*

In his *Enchiridion*, Epictetus teaches us that every individual has a fundamental choice—whether to live by inner or outer values. This choice is summed up by his famous doctrine, “Of things some are in our power and others are not. In our power, are opinion, movement towards a thing [aim], desire, aversion (turning from a thing); and in a word, whatever are our own acts; not in our power are the body, property, reputation, offices (magisterial power) and, in a word, whatever are not our own acts.”<sup>34</sup>

Epictetus goes on to warn that as long as a person occupies himself with externals, he will neglect the inner self. Since one cannot control external issues,

they must become “indifferents”—that is, they are outside our will. As Epictetus puts it, “The things in our power are by nature free, not subject to restraint nor hindrance: but the things not in our power are weak, slavish, subject to restraint and in the power of others.” The Stoic pursues only that which is his own, within his power, and seeks a rational, self-sufficient existence motivated by the discipline of personal virtue.<sup>35</sup>

Such an unrelenting concentration on the inner self at the expense of a life in society may strike some readers as a harsh doctrine. However, it is important to note that the Stoic philosophers never suggest that an individual should not partake of “the game of life,” the search for public success or worldly goods. They only warn that one should not become caught up in the game to the extent that it reduces individual freedom of choice and constrains the pursuit of virtue. Stoics are not unworldly. It must be remembered that two of the most important Roman Stoics, Cicero and Seneca, were wealthy politicians, while Marcus Aurelius was at once emperor, soldier, and philosopher.<sup>36</sup> A true Stoic is a participant in human affairs who understands the harsh realities of the world only too well. It is not for nothing that Epictetus compares the Stoic’s life to that of the discharge of military service to the highest standards: “Do you not know that life is a soldier’s service? . . . So too it is in the world; each man’s life is a campaign, and a long and varied one. It is for you to play the soldier’s part—do everything at the General’s bidding, divining his wishes, if it be possible.”<sup>37</sup>

It is because of Stoics’ understanding of life that they will never be dismayed by happenings outside their spans of control; *Nil admirari* is their motto—“Be astonished at nothing.” In Stoic cosmology, true freedom lies in the form of how much autonomy can be gained by an individual in order to live a virtuous existence, despite the pressures of professional duties and social obligations.<sup>38</sup> One of the most fundamental of Stoic attitudes, then, is what Pierre Hadot, in his analysis of Marcus Aurelius’s thought, describes as “the delimitation of our own sphere of liberty as an impregnable islet of autonomy, in the midst of the vast river of events and of Destiny.”<sup>39</sup>

### *Striving to Control Emotions Is the Essence of Rational Activity*

The ancient Stoics believed that all moral purpose must be grounded in reason, not emotion. Consequently, emotions such as desire, pleasure, fear, and dejection must be transformed into acts of free will. For example, one suffers fear only if one *decides* to fear—for as Epictetus observes, everything in life is connected to “what lies within our will,” or in Admiral Stockdale’s interpretation, “decisions of the will.”<sup>40</sup> For the Stoic, the unhappiest people are those preoccupied individuals who, as Seneca puts it, have the desires of immortals combined with the fears of mortals. Such unfortunates allow emotionally based fears

concerning their bodies, worldly possessions, and relationships to assail and overcome them.<sup>41</sup> Those who are unhappy are always “oblivious of the past, negligent of the present, [and] fearful of the future.” They exemplify the truth that “the least concern of the pre-occupied man is life; it is the hardest science of all.”<sup>42</sup>

For Seneca, prosperity can come to the vulgar and to ordinary talents, but triumphing over the disasters and terrors of life takes a special prowess that is “the privilege of the great man.”<sup>43</sup> The Stoic must master the emotions of Fate, for “you do not shine outwardly because all your goods are turned inward. So does our [Stoic] world scorn what lies without and rejoice in the contemplation of itself. Your whole good I have bestowed within yourselves: *your good fortune is not to need good fortune.*”<sup>44</sup> The central ideal of the Stoic will is thus to master all conflicting emotions in favor of the power of reason and so create an inner self that is, in Cicero’s words, “safe, impregnable, fenced and fortified”—a harmony of mind and soul that is capable of functioning both in isolation and yet is also in comradeship with other virtuous minds.<sup>45</sup>

#### *Virtue Comes from Knowing What Is in One’s Control and What Is Not*

As we have seen, in the inner citadel of the Stoic soul it is important to distinguish between the things that depend on human activity and the things that do not, for as Seneca notes, “it is in the power of any person to despise all things but in the power of no person to possess all things.”<sup>46</sup> The true meaning of personal freedom is summed up by Epictetus in the *Enchiridion*: “Whoever then wishes to be free, let him neither wish for anything nor avoid anything which depends on others: if he does not observe this rule, he must be a slave.”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in order to maximize the realm of personal freedom, a Stoic competes with others only as a matter of moral choice, when virtue and self-knowledge are at stake. Epictetus warns against external appearances, since the nature of good is always within. As he puts it, “You can be invincible if you enter no contest in which it is not in your power to conquer.”<sup>48</sup>

Ultimately, Stoicism, while challenging to modern military sensibilities, is not an impossible creed. As Nancy Sherman has argued, it should not be interpreted as a narrow philosophy aimed at creating a race of iron men, divorced from cosmopolitan concerns of fellowship and social community.<sup>49</sup> Rather, Stoicism is about fostering a spirit of invincibility only in the sense of a willingness to endure and overcome life’s inevitable challenges, difficulties, and tragedies. Moreover, the Stoic who seeks such invincible resolution should not be viewed as in search of moral perfection but rather as seeking constant moral progress within a social context. It is this interpretation of Stoicism—one defined by the Roman philosopher Panaetius of Rhodes as representing a



“progression towards virtue”—that is most useful as a creed for twenty-first-century military professionals.<sup>50</sup>

According to Cicero, this is a Stoicism that upholds public service undertaken in “a spirit of humanity and mutual consideration” as the supreme good. For Cicero, in his various writings, including *On Duties*, the exemplar of such service was the great soldier and man of letters Scipio Africanus the Elder.<sup>51</sup> In Cicero’s “The Dream of Scipio,” Africanus appears in a dream to his adoptive grandson Scipio Africanus the Younger and reveals to him the essence of public duty.<sup>52</sup> The elder Africanus, conqueror of Hannibal and epitome of Roman grandeur, teaches the younger, “Every man who has preserved or helped his country, or has made its greatness even greater, is reserved a special place in heaven, where he may enjoy eternal happiness.” The key to an honorable life is found not in private affairs but in public service: “The very best deeds are those which serve your country.”<sup>53</sup>

Viewed in terms of moral progression, then, the Stoic life is a profoundly human quest for knowledge and as such is a philosophical journey, never a destination—an archetype to be approximated, never an ideal to be achieved. The Stoic overcomes the playground of the Furies that life represents by developing an endurance marked by the cultivation of reason and the practice of willpower—both born out of a lifelong pursuit of good character.<sup>54</sup>

## STOIC LESSONS AND CHOICES FOR TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY MILITARY PROFESSIONALS

How can so demanding a personal philosophy work within the parameters of the twenty-first-century Western military profession? Eight moral lessons and seven moral choices that reflect the influence of Stoicism emerge from the annals of Western philosophy, literature, and history. They may assist uniformed military personnel in the arming of the inner selves as they pursue their journeys of professional development.

### *Eight Moral Lessons from Stoicism*

A first lesson concerns the need to *develop an understanding of the meaning of a human life*, assailed from three directions—the body, the external world, and personal relationships. The writings of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius argue that life often resembles a storm-tossed sea, not a tranquil ocean, and that one should seek to navigate its shoals and currents according to a moral philosophy. As Seneca says in his letter “The Happy Life,” the road to meaningful life lies not in the senses but in the pursuit of virtue and honor based on “self-sufficiency and abiding tranquillity.” Together, these qualities produce a constancy that in turn confers “the gift of greatness of soul”—a gift that consummates everlasting good and transcends the brevity of human existence.<sup>55</sup>

It is also useful to recall Marcus Aurelius's injunction in his *Meditations* on the need for a philosophy of life. The *Meditations*, composed as it was in campaign tents in innumerable frontier wars against Teutonic barbarians, has an obvious resonance for members of the profession of arms today:

Of man's life, his time is a point, his existence a flux, his sensation clouded, his body's entire composition corruptible, his vital spirit an eddy of breath, his fortune hard to predict, his fame uncertain. Briefly, all the things of the body, a river; all the things of the spirit, dream and delirium; his life is a warfare and a sojourn in a strange land, his after-fame oblivion. What then can be his escort through life? One thing and one thing only, Philosophy.<sup>56</sup>

For many Stoics, meaningful living is further symbolized by Xenophon's story about Hercules's choice. On the eve of manhood, Hercules retires to the desert to reflect on his future. He is soon visited by two goddesses, Aretē (Virtue) and Hēdonē (Pleasure), who offer him different paths in life. Aretē offers Hercules an arduous path with much pain, labor, and tumult but also true meaning, moral purpose, and enduring honor. In contrast, Hēdonē offers him a pleasurable path of sensual ease, repose, and sumptuous living but without lasting significance. Hercules, with philosophical wisdom, chooses *aretē* and a life of struggle but one defined by righteous action, fidelity, honor, and decency.<sup>57</sup>

A second lesson from the Stoic canon concerns the question of *how a military professional should face his day*, and again one can draw upon Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*. Marcus believed that "a man should stand upright, not be held upright."<sup>58</sup> A virtuous soul must always seek moral autonomy, because it is engaged in a personal journey to eternity. An individual's true power comes from the inner strength arising from a self-mastery that is honed to overcome the ebb and flow of frustration and failure. For the Roman soldier-emperor, then, daily moral life was about honorable action irrespective of the circumstances that an individual must face and to this end he offered the following sage advice:

Say to yourself in the early morning: I shall meet today inquisitive, ungrateful, violent, treacherous, envious, uncharitable men. All these things have come upon them through ignorance of real good and ill. But I, because I have seen that the nature of good is the right and of ill the wrong, and that the nature of the man himself who does wrong is akin to my own (not of the same blood and seed, but partaking with me in mind, that is in a portion of divinity), I can neither be harmed by any of them, for no man will involve me in wrong, nor can I be angry with my kinsman or hate him; for we have come into the world to live together.<sup>59</sup>

For Marcus, those who behave badly do so because they lack Stoic character and value the external "indifferents" in life; theirs is a rationality that remains untoured by the quest for virtue. In contrast, the Stoic, aside from necessary

cooperation with others for the common good, will always remain personally aloof from those who possess “ignorant and unlearned” souls.<sup>60</sup>

A third lesson of great value imparts the central tenet of Stoicism, namely, *knowing what one can control and what one cannot control*. Here a military professional can take to heart Epictetus’s advice in the *Enchiridion* to the effect that we always have a choice about the character of our inner lives and that trying to control or change what we cannot only results in anguish and torment. As Epictetus puts it, “If you desire anything which is not in our power, you must be unfortunate; but of the things in our power, and which it is good to desire, nothing is yet before you”; therefore,

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*A gulf has grown between the honor codes of volunteer military professionals and parent societies.*

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“Pursue nothing that is outside us, nothing that is not our own.”<sup>61</sup>

This tenet does not translate to mere passivity in the storm of

events. On the contrary, the Stoic interior character can exert its own will in a duel with external events with the power with which a magnet draws iron.

How an individual military professional exerts his will on an external situation is illuminated by Charles de Gaulle’s pre–World War II reflections on philosophy and military self-reliance in the opening chapters of his 1932 book *The Edge of the Sword*. Influenced by Cicero’s notion that character exhibits the supreme value of self-reliance and that “great men of action have always been of the meditative type,” the French soldier and future statesman wrote that when faced with the challenge of events, the man of character has recourse to himself, for “it is character that supplies the essential element, the creative touch, the divine spark, in other words, the basic fact of initiative.”<sup>62</sup> The instinctive response of the man of character “is to leave his mark on action, to take responsibility for it, to make it *his own business*.” Such an individual “finds an especial attractiveness in difficulty, since it is only by coming to grips with difficulty that he can realise his potentialities.”<sup>63</sup> After France’s disastrous defeat of 1940, de Gaulle lived these tenets first as leader in exile of the Free French and later, after 1958, as president of his country, in the cauldron of counterrevolutionary warfare in Algeria.

A powerful fourth lesson deals with how *happiness can be found only within*, and again a military professional can make use of Epictetus’s and Marcus Aurelius’s writings—this time in the form of their teaching that maximizing individual freedom is the only worthy goal in life. Happiness born out of such a sense of freedom depends on the interaction of three spheres of personal activity: the *discipline of desire* (control of emotions), the *discipline of assent* (the exercise of judgment based on reason), and the *discipline of action* (the pursuit of

honorable service).<sup>64</sup> Here one can learn from the great seventeenth-century French thinker René Descartes, whose moral philosophy has been described as a form of neo-Stoicism.<sup>65</sup> In his “Discourse on Method,” Descartes writes that the path to human happiness is to be found in the disciplines of Stoic thought. Descartes described the “third maxim” of his system of morals as follows:

My third maxim was always to *conquer myself rather than fortune*, and to alter my desires rather than change the order of the world, and generally to accustom myself to believe that there is nothing entirely within our power but our own thoughts: so that after we have done our best in regard to the things that are without us, our ill-success cannot possibly be failure on our part.<sup>66</sup>

Although such an approach required great self-discipline and “long exercise and meditation often repeated,” in it, concludes Descartes, “is to be found the secret of those philosophers who, in ancient times, were able to free themselves from the empire of fortune, or despite suffering or poverty, to rival their gods in their happiness.”<sup>67</sup>

The fifth lesson suggests that *events do not necessarily hurt us, but our views of them can*. In this respect, the Stoics urge the use of reason to ensure correct perception, since if we cannot always choose our external circumstances, we can always choose how we shall respond to them. The Stoic view of life as a valiant response to a fate that must be borne is immortalized in the poem “Invictus” (Invincible), written in 1875 by William Ernest Henley, an Englishman who endured a lifetime of debilitating illness and infirmity. Despite his great suffering, Henley chose to remain undiminished, and the unconquerable spirit he represented is enshrined in the lines of what is regarded by many today as the personification of the Stoic creed:

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutches of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
 How charged with punishment the scroll.  
 I am the master of my fate:  
 I am the captain of my soul.<sup>68</sup>

Henley's Captain of the Soul is unflinching and unyielding, not least in the face of the ultimate adversity—death. Here, we should note the Stoic teaching that death is everyone's fate and should not be unduly feared. As Marcus Aurelius dryly observes, "An unscientific but none the less a helpful support to disdain of death is to review those who have clung tenaciously to life." Similarly, Seneca writes that because life is brief and perishable, "everything must therefore be borne with fortitude, because events do not, as we suppose, happen but arrive by appointment."<sup>69</sup>

From a military perspective, perhaps the ultimate Stoic view of how to master the spectre of death can be found in the works of the former World War II combat infantryman and writer James Jones, the author of *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line*. Jones has been described as "the Tolstoy of the foot soldiers," a "mid-twentieth century American stoic, akin to Marcus Aurelius in his long apprenticeship to war, suffering, and the effort to bear it all."<sup>70</sup> Detesting those who, from afar, glorified war, Jones loved the American fighting man; his essay "Evolution of a Soldier," from his 1975 book *WW II*, is a bracing Stoic text for military professionals facing the test of combat. With searing honesty, Jones writes that the most successful combat soldier makes a "final full acceptance of the fact that his name is already written down in the rolls of the already dead":<sup>71</sup>

Every combat soldier, if he follows far enough along the path that began with his induction, must, I think, be led inexorably to that awareness. He must make a compact with himself or with Fate that he is lost. Only then can he function as he ought to function, under fire. He knows and accepts beforehand that he's dead. . . . That soldier you have walking around there with this awareness in him is the final end product of the EVOLUTION OF A SOLDIER.<sup>72</sup>

Jones admits that this is a grim and hard philosophy, but he argues that those who accept the status of the "living dead" paradoxically find their fatalism vibrant and life affirming, since "the acceptance and the giving up of hope create and reinstalled hope in a kind of reverse-process photo-negative function." In accepting a Stoic doctrine that "sufficient unto the day is the existence thereof," many soldiers ironically increase their chances of battlefield effectiveness and personal survival. They learn to hate war and yet also to love the drama, excitement, and comradeship as aids in overcoming the dread of death in combat. Still others learn through experience to rationalize and master war's harsh purpose and rigorous demands and make it their lives' great professional calling.<sup>73</sup> Jones's

perceptive Stoical meditations on how a soldier can respond to the external circumstances of battle, which are beyond his personal control, are among the most realistic writings ever penned on modern war. They represent a timeless testament for all those in uniform who seek to be Henley's Captains of the Soul.

A sixth lesson upholds the great Stoic truth that *character matters more than reputation*. Echoing Charles de Gaulle, General George C. Marshall once observed those who are called to lead men in battle must be judged less on technical ability than on character, on a reputation for fairness, patriotic purpose, and selfless determination.<sup>74</sup> A good way of reinforcing this message is to read Howard Spring's 1940 novel *Fame Is the Spur*, the tale of the rise of an idealistic British working-class political leader, Hamer Radshaw, who in pursuit of high office becomes corrupted, renouncing every principle he ever espoused and every person who ever placed faith in him.<sup>75</sup> Making a cavalry sabre his honor symbol, he gradually allows its blade to lie unused. In a memorable scene in the 1947 film of Spring's book, Radshaw at the end of his life, resplendent with accumulated honors and a peerage, tries to draw the sword, only to find that the blade has rusted in its scabbard. The scene is a metaphor of a career in which Radshaw's soul has rusted in his body and his moral principles have withered in the face of unrelenting personal ambition.<sup>76</sup>

A seventh lesson is that in the Stoic world, *effective leadership and good conduct are always dependent on a willingness to play the role that is assigned*. For those who aspire to be military Stoics, mastery of the "three disciplines" of desire, assent, and action is all-important.<sup>77</sup> At every stage of his military career, no matter what the personal discomfort, the professional officer must seek to behave correctly. As Epictetus puts it, life is like a play, and "it is your duty to act well the part that is given to you; but to select the part belongs to another."<sup>78</sup>

Particularly relevant to the military professional is the Stoic's "discipline of action," the need for honorable and "appropriate actions" when serving the greater good. A useful reminder of what can happen when such appropriate actions are ignored is James Kennaway's *Tunes of Glory*, a concise and powerful 1956 study of military character.<sup>79</sup> Set in an unnamed peacetime Scottish Highland regiment in the early post-Second World War era, the novel explores what happens when an acting battalion commander refuses to give his loyalty to an appointed successor. The passed-over officer, the extrovert Major Jock Sinclair, is an up-from-the-ranks hero of El Alamein whose charismatic wartime leadership and natural aggression have in peacetime conditions been reduced to a residue of professional soldiering bolstered by hard drinking and boorish behavior masquerading as manliness. Sinclair is replaced by a polar opposite, the cultivated but sensitive Lieutenant Colonel Basil Barrow, a graduate of Eton,

Sandhurst, and Oxford, a former prisoner of war of the Japanese and “Special Duties” officer.

In a mixture of aggressive spirit, hurt pride, and class resentment, Sinclair refuses to accept his loss of command for the good of the regiment. The wily Sinclair constantly criticizes and undermines the new commanding officer, and his psychological and physical subversions confuse and divide the battalion’s officers and noncommissioned officers.<sup>80</sup> A court-martial brings a crisis that eventually implodes into a double tragedy in the form of Barrow’s suicide and Sinclair’s mental collapse from a belated sense of guilt for the lethal consequences of his coarse egocentrism. As a study of military character, *Tunes of Glory* is a compelling reminder of the need for Stoic self-discipline and of the demands of duty and obligation irrespective of individual feelings. As a study of character, the book can be usefully supplemented by the masterly British film made under the same title in 1960.<sup>81</sup>

An eighth and final Stoic lesson *concerns the question of suffering and where the line of goodness may be found in life*. For the military professional, suffering is an inescapable part of duty, and here one can do no better than study Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s reflections, in his monumental *The Gulag Archipelago*, on how the collision between “the soul and barbed wire” may yet become a transformative force for good. Solzhenitsyn’s chapter “The Ascent”—one of the greatest pieces of twentieth-century writing—is about nourishment of the soul in the midst of despair and hardship. The Russian dissident writes of how misfortune may become the raw material from which the soul “ripens from suffering.”<sup>82</sup> In “The Ascent” Solzhenitsyn, despite years of dehumanization in the Soviet prison system, reaches a Stoic consciousness about the essential individual nature of good and evil and the power of personal revelation.<sup>83</sup> He accepts that while it is impossible to expel evil from the world in its entirety, “it is possible to constrict it within each person” by an awakening of omniscience, from a self-knowledge of good that is born out of suffering.<sup>84</sup>

It was only when I lay there on the rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not between states nor between classes nor between political parties but right through every human heart, through all human hearts. . . . Since then I have come to understand the truth of all the religions of the world: They struggle with the *evil inside a human being* (inside every human being).<sup>85</sup>

Prison had nourished Solzhenitsyn’s soul in the pursuit of virtue, allowing him to write, “I turn back to the years of my imprisonment and say, sometimes to the astonishment of those about me. . . . *Bless you prison*, for having been in my life!”<sup>86</sup>



Solzhenitsyn's world is that inhabited earlier by other Stoics denied human freedom, including the great Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes, America's James Stockdale, and South Africa's Nelson Mandela. All of these extraordinary figures underwent a form of Solzhenitsyn's ascent of the soul and reached Stoic transcendence through suffering. Their experiences and their subsequent lives echo Seneca's wise teaching that "disaster is virtue's opportunity," for true character can never be revealed without a struggle with adversity—just as "gold is tried by fire, brave men [are tested] by misfortune."<sup>87</sup>

### *Seven Moral Choices from Stoicism*

All members of the profession of arms face a career in which moral choices are inescapable. Stoicism may assist individuals in applying judgments born out of the cultivation of good character. The following seven moral choices, all drawn from Western literature and history, are offered as a framework for the moral decision making of military professionals.

The first of these choices—*deciding the kind of military professional you want to be*—is drawn from Anton Myrer's 1968 novel *Once an Eagle*, about the American profession of arms between the First World War and the beginnings of Vietnam. Although the setting of the book is firmly American in style and tone, Myrer's tale is a universal one.<sup>88</sup> In it two officer archetypes are contrasted. The first archetype is the dutiful and Stoic Sam Damon, a moral warrior and an exemplar of all that is best in the profession of arms. The second is the Epicurean and brilliantly cynical careerist Courtney Massengale, an officer of many social connections but whose moral compass is as corrupt as that of Lord Henry Wotton in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Damon and Massengale both rise to become generals, but their careers are in stark contrast. The Stoic Damon, a straight-talking "mustang" (i.e., up from the ranks) with a brilliant World War I combat record, is no match for the silken malice of Massengale, especially in the flick-knife political world of the U.S. Army staff in Washington. As a result, over the years Damon, the complete military professional, is perpetually outranked and outmaneuvered by Massengale's unscrupulous careerism—a careerism symbolized by insouciant charm and great verbal facility and propelled by an "astonishing intellectual prowess like some jeweled sword."<sup>89</sup>

As Damon's superior officer during World War II in the Pacific and later in Southeast Asia, Massengale regards Damon's relentless honesty and single-minded military integrity not as operational assets but as obstacles to his own advancement. Massengale dismisses Damon's frequent professional protestations over his self-seeking command methods as naïve: "Like most strictly combat types he [Damon] lacks political savoir faire."<sup>90</sup> Myrer's sprawling saga

becomes a powerful meditation on the moral choices involved in military officership and upon the eternal danger that the unscrupulous Massengales pose to the honest Damons. Indeed, both the title and tone of the book are taken from Aeschylus's famous lines:

So in the Libyan fable it is told  
That once an eagle stricken with a dart,  
Said, when he saw the fashion of the shaft,  
"With our own feathers, not by others' hands,  
Are we now smitten."<sup>91</sup>

The second moral choice that will confront many Western officers in particular is *the substance of officership as a choice between a quest for status and a search for real achievement*. Here a useful model is the tempestuous career of the brilliant U.S. Air Force colonel John Boyd—a man whom some observers have regarded as “the American Sun Tzu,” because of his espousal of maneuver warfare and the novel “OODA” (observe, orient, decide, act) decision cycle. Boyd was an irascible and outspoken intellectual maverick whose views were always at odds with the U.S. Air Force establishment. Consequently, his strategic ideas were unwelcome and remained little appreciated during his professional career.<sup>92</sup>

Today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, those who opposed and impeded Boyd's career are forgotten men, while Boyd's influence permeates advanced military doctrine throughout the West. In retrospect, his dogged pursuit of strategic innovation can now be seen as a monument of moral courage, a tribute to imaginative professional perseverance, and a salutary reminder that professional militaries often neglect their finest minds. Boyd's spirit of officership is conveyed in his Stoic-like “to be or to do, that is the question,” speech delivered to military colleagues and subordinates in the Pentagon in June 1974:

You have to make a choice about what kind of person you are going to be. There are two [military] career paths in front of you, and you have to choose which path you will follow. One path leads to promotions, titles and positions of distinctions. To achieve success down that path, you have to conduct yourself a certain way. You must go along with the system. . . . The other path leads to doing things that are truly significant for the Air Force, but you may have to cross swords with the party line on occasion. You can't go down both paths, you have to choose. Do you want to *be* a man of distinction or do you want to *do* things that really influence the shape of the Air Force? To be or to do, that is the question.<sup>93</sup>

A third moral choice facing military professionals involves *the need to resist the corrosive influence on the warrior spirit of bureaucratization*. As Charles de Gaulle once wrote, the true combat officer must always keep his intellect focused

on the art of war and resist the intrusion of bureaucratic politics—for only through a dedicated pursuit of military philosophy “will an edge be given to the sword.”<sup>94</sup> A good example of this moral choice is exemplified by Emmanuel Wald’s 1992 book *The Decline of Israeli National Security since 1967*, in which the author analyzes the conceptual confusion and analytical failings of the Israeli officer corps—confusion and failings that arguably came to a head during the reverses suffered in the second Lebanon war, in 2006.<sup>95</sup>

Wald’s book warns that during the 1970s and 1980s the Israeli Defense Force’s much-vaunted operational philosophy, honed in the 1948, 1956, and 1967 wars against the Arabs, became corroded by “a procedure of nonstrategy” based on bureaucratic compromise and conformity.<sup>96</sup> Wald quotes General Israel Tal’s speech at the Israeli National Defense College in April 1979 on how bureaucratic arrogance, intrigue, and mediocrity can combine to destroy the creative imagination that is fundamental to future generals:

[Israeli] officers at the rank of captain or major, naïve and full of youthful enthusiasm, believe they will be judged by their achievements. Lacking bureaucratic experience, they will try to exercise critical and original thought. . . . If these officers do not grasp that it is forbidden to damage bureaucratic harmony and coddling they will quickly be dropped from the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] system which does not tolerate deviants. If they are able to last in an organisation which, by its very nature, enslaves and constrains the thinker, then they will eventually, after many years of learning, reach the rank of general. By then, of course, not much can be expected from them in terms of creative thinking.<sup>97</sup>

A fourth moral choice for those in uniform arises from the proposition that *no individual of character can remain neutral in a moral crisis*. Here much can be learned from the 1930s “wilderness years” of Winston Churchill, during which, in Stoic-like grandeur, he waged a lonely crusade to warn the British people about the mortal threat that growing Nazi power posed to Western civilization. In particular, Churchill’s 1948 *The Gathering Storm* is instructive, for in this volume of his monumental history of the Second World War the great statesman documents how the liberal democracies of the 1930s lacked essential elements of character, persistence, and conviction in matters of international security. Western policy toward Hitler’s Germany took the form of moral compromise, based on the policy of appeasement. Knowing that this failure of statesmanship was to create a war in which the worst “material ruin and moral havoc” in recorded history would be inflicted upon humanity, Churchill reflects:

It is my purpose as one who lived and acted in those days to show how easily the tragedy of the Second World War could have been prevented; how the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous. . . . We shall see how the

councils of prudence and restraint may become the prime agents of mortal danger; how the middle course adopted from desires for safety and a quiet life may be found to lead direct to the bull's-eye of disaster.<sup>98</sup>

Churchill's book embodies his famous moral lesson: "In War: Resolution / In Defeat: Defiance / In Victory: Magnanimity / In Peace: Good Will."<sup>99</sup>

A fifth choice that reflects Stoic teaching revolves around *the necessity for a military professional always to make the best of adversity*. As Seneca argues, the individual of good character will always seek to turn adversity to advantage, for "the thing that matters is not *what* you bear but *how* you bear it."<sup>100</sup> There are interesting connections between Stoicism and Christianity here, as evidenced in such works as St. Augustine's *Confessions* and Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*.<sup>101</sup> As mentioned earlier, a Christianized form of Stoicism was disseminated in the sixteenth century by Justus Lipsius, upholding Seneca's teaching that "we are born into a kingdom; to obey God is to be free." Indeed, the origins of the Western professional military ethic itself can be traced to Lipsius's Christian neo-Stoicism and its influence over such early modern Western military reformers as Maurice of Nassau, Gustavus Adolphus, and Oliver Cromwell.<sup>102</sup> Given these connections, the anonymous "Soldier's Prayer" from the American Civil War, found in a military prison in 1865 (and given below as reproduced by Admiral Stockdale), repays reading as both a Stoic and Christian testament:

We asked for strength that we might achieve,  
 God made us weak that we might obey.  
 We asked for health that we might do great things  
 He gave us infirmity that we might do better things  
 We asked for riches that we might be happy;  
 We were given poverty that we might be wise.  
 We asked for power that we might have the praise of men;  
 We were given weakness that we might feel the need of God  
 We asked for all things that we might enjoy life;  
 We were given life that we might enjoy all things  
 We received *nothing* that we asked for  
 But all that we *hoped* for  
 And our prayers were answered. We were most blessed.<sup>103</sup>

The sixth moral choice that military professionals need to ponder is *whether they are willing to pay the terrible price that may be required when choosing to act out of conscience and principle*. Nowhere in recent military history is this better illustrated than by the German army officers who joined the abortive 20 July 1944 VALKYRIE plot to kill Adolf Hitler, as recounted by such eminent historians

as Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, Peter Hoffmann, and Joachim Fest.<sup>104</sup> Much inspiration can be drawn from the actions of Brigadier General Henning von Tresckow and Colonel Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, who were the noblest spirits behind the 1944 conspiracy to rid Germany of a criminal regime. Both men came to view Hitler as the Antichrist, the archenemy of both Germany and Western civilization, whose death was a redemptive necessity “before the eyes of the world and of history.”<sup>105</sup>

Immediately following the failure of the assassination attempt, von Tresckow prepared to commit suicide with a grenade in order to deny the SS the opportunity to torture him into revealing the names of other conspirators. As this young general and cultured German patriot left his Eastern Front headquarters on 21 July 1944 to take his own life in no-man’s-land, he turned to his adjutant, Captain Fabian von Schlabrendorff, and said with Stoic poignancy:

When, in a few hours, I go before God to account for what I have done and left undone, I know I will be able to justify in good conscience what I did in the struggle against Hitler. God promised Abraham that He would not destroy Sodom if just ten righteous men could be found and I hope God will not destroy Germany. None of us can bewail his own death; those who consented to join our circle put on the robe of Nessus. A human being’s moral integrity begins when he is prepared to sacrifice his life for his convictions.<sup>106</sup>

Tresckow’s courageous participation in the doomed 1944 assassination plot embodies Seneca’s famous challenge: “What is the duty of the good man? To offer himself to Fate,” for “good men toil, spend and are spent, and willingly.”<sup>107</sup>

A seventh and final moral choice for military professionals concerns the need to *submit oneself to the spirit of endurance*. Such a choice reflects the Stoic teaching that true courage represents steadfastness of soul, expressed in a decision to bear and forbear the storms of life over time and circumstance. In Seneca’s words, “The demonstration of courage can never be gentle. Fortune scourges and rends us; we must endure it. It is not cruelty but a contest, and the oftener we submit to it the braver shall we be.”<sup>108</sup>

Here much wisdom can be gleaned from the writings of the philosophers Aristotle and Arthur Schopenhauer, from the Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor E. Frankl, from former British prime minister Gordon Brown, and from the American war correspondent and novelist Glendon Swarthout.<sup>109</sup> In his insightful reflections on the meaning of courage, Aristotle warns us that true courage differs from audacity.<sup>110</sup> The latter is counterfeit courage; it is based on an “excess of intrepidity,” on a physical impulsiveness that represents “a boastful species of bravery and the mere ape of manhood” and may conceal a fundamental moral cowardice. For Aristotle, real courage—particularly in its

military manifestation—is based on a combination of confidence and caution, on the capacity for discriminating thought and clear judgment, and it prefers “the grace and beauty of a habitual fortitude.”<sup>111</sup>

Both Arthur Schopenhauer and Viktor Frankl arrive at a similar conclusion on courage as a form of fortitude. In his writing on ethics, Schopenhauer defines courage as “a kind of endurance.”<sup>112</sup> Frankl’s book *Man’s Search for Meaning* echoes the work of Epictetus, in stating that the way one behaves in a situation depends more on personal decisions rather than on impersonal conditions.<sup>113</sup> He

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*Ethics need to be complemented by a stronger focus on philosophy that permits the professional military to become fully a self-conscious moral community.*

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holds that all faced by physical danger and moral adversity have at their disposal a master key to pick the lock of courage, in the form of “the last of human freedoms—[the right] to choose one’s

attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”<sup>114</sup> More recently, in his *Courage: Eight Portraits*, Gordon Brown concentrates on courage in the Stoic spirit, not simply as physical audacity but as prolonged exposure to danger and risk in the form of “sustained altruism,” exhibited by committed individuals as diverse as the British wartime nurse Edith Cavell, the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the Burmese political dissident Aung San Suu Kyi. Brown quotes approvingly Churchill’s famous remark that “courage is the first of all human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all the others.”<sup>115</sup>

Perhaps nowhere in twentieth-century American military literature are Aristotle’s distinction between mere audacity and real courage, Frankl’s “last of human freedoms,” and Brown’s notion of “sustained altruism” better illustrated than in Glendon Swarthout’s Pulitzer Prize–nominated 1958 novel *They Came to Cordura*, one of the most insightful literary meditations ever composed on what constitutes courage under arms.<sup>116</sup> Swarthout’s novel is set during the U.S. Army’s abortive 1916 punitive expedition into Mexico to chastise Pancho Villa and his revolutionaries. The central figure is Major Thomas Thorn, awards officer of the campaign, who is ordered to escort five cavalymen cited for the Congressional Medal of Honor across the barren desert of Chihuahua to the town of Cordura and safety. As the patrol moves across the stark terrain, Thorn, a middle-aged soldier tortured by the memory of his own sudden failure of nerve in a previous military engagement, ponders the qualities of the five heroes in his charge, whom he regards as members of Socrates’s “golden race.”<sup>117</sup>

The journey to Cordura—the town’s name means “courage” in Spanish—becomes a dark metaphor by which Swarthout examines the character of courage in wartime. The patrol is ambushed by *Villistas* and tormented by heat, thirst, and

adversity, and the golden mettle of Thorn's five "heroes" begins to betray base qualities. With the exception of Thorn, each man falters under the strain of prolonged exposure to danger and risk. Faced by the need to exhibit continuous courage, each of the five heroes chooses instead to become a moral coward. It becomes clear that the physical gallantry under fire that had been demonstrated by the five Medal of Honor candidates had been little more than Aristotle's "deformed courage" of audacity, momentary accidents in their otherwise undistinguished lives. In the end, Thorn, with classic Stoic fortitude, comes to Cordura—and thus to the meaning of courage—by delivering the flawed nominees to safety against all odds and, within sight of the town, at the sacrifice of his own life. His journey has seen him discover the reservoirs of an enduring bravery that he feared he did not possess—a realization that allows him to fulfil a sworn duty to five apparently courageous, but in reality morally unworthy, comrades.<sup>118</sup>

### LIFE IS BEING A SOLDIER

In contemporary Western culture, the teachings of ancient Stoicism may seem redundant, but it is not so. In twenty-first-century warfare the instrumental dimension of the scientific battle space may be important to success, but warfare remains a profoundly human experience that reflects existential meaning and reveals both moral agency and character. We must remember that human nature is unchanging and that it is hubristic of any generation to suggest that it can somehow escape the long shadow cast by history. We may not live in the past, but the past lives in the present, and we ignore its wisdom at our peril. There is a famous saying (attributed to Albert Einstein) that is especially pertinent to advanced Western militaries in the new millennium—"Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted, counts."

As the ancient Stoic thinkers teach us, what truly does count is the nature of life itself as an unending form of warfare that must be confronted and mastered if one is to overcome fortune and fate. While we can never insulate ourselves from misfortune, tragedy, or suffering, Stoicism, a philosophy of resolution that spans the ages, seeks to make its adherents Captains of the Soul, building inner citadels of character, rational thought, and moral values. The Stoic journey is one of rigor and self-discipline; it demands a regime of constant self-improvement. It does not promise a life of comfort or ease and one can expect to become only a reasonable archetype of the successful Stoic, since perfect wisdom and complete equanimity are unreachable ideals. In words that are not for the fainthearted, Epictetus warns of the endurance required from the master Stoic: "Show me a man who though sick is happy, who though in danger is happy, who though dying is happy, who though condemned to exile is happy, and who though in disrepute is happy! Show him to me! By the gods, I would then see a Stoic!"<sup>119</sup>



Yet for all its ascetic challenges and arduous demands, a Stoic philosophy has much to offer today's Western uniformed professionals in their pursuit of *vivere militare*. Nowhere is this truer than in the Stoic teaching that real courage is in itself endurance of the human spirit. Such courage is based on a resilience in which individuality is embedded within a larger community of comradeship, a unity of self and society that upholds a balance between the principles of private excellence and public duty. For these reasons, the Stoic philosophy bequeathed to us by the Hellenistic Age will continue to find new adherents in the twenty-first century, not least among those who choose the lives of duty, honor, and sacrifice demanded by the military calling. As Epictetus also writes, "Great is the struggle [of the Stoic life] and divine the task. The prize is a kingdom, freedom, serenity and peace."<sup>120</sup> In many respects, the Stoic ideal recalls the famous injunction to the Ithacan wanderers in Tennyson's poem "Ulysses"—"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."<sup>121</sup> In the Stoic creed, it is always our moral mastery of the testing journey of life that abides. In this sense, Stoicism's virtues are like the stars in the night sky: they shine high above us, and while we may not always reach them, we are ennobled both by their presence and by their promise.

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## PLACES AND BASES

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### The Chinese Navy's Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean

*Daniel J. Kostecka*

Due to self-imposed policy, the People's Republic of China (PRC) does not base military forces in foreign countries, and PRC officials have used this as evidence of China's peaceful development.<sup>1</sup> However, China's growing global economic and political interests are causing Beijing to take a more nuanced approach to its policies regarding the deployment and employment of military force. Specifically, the ongoing deployment of People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) warships to the Gulf of Aden, now in the sixth rotation of combatants, to guard international shipping against pirates operating from the Horn of Africa has highlighted the need for shore-based logistics support for PLAN forces oper-

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ating in the Indian Ocean.<sup>2</sup> Over the past year, public statements by Chinese academics and government officials have indicated that there is a debate going on in China over the need to establish some sort of overseas infrastructure to support deployed naval forces. Rear Admiral Yin Zhou (Retired), chairman of the Chinese Navy Informatization Experts Advisory Committee, opined during an interview on China National Radio in December 2009 that China requires a "stable and permanent supply and repair base."<sup>3</sup> Rear Admiral Yin's interview was picked up by the international press circuit and has generated a great deal of excitement, although in reality he did not say anything that has not already been said by other Chinese government officials and academics. Despite an immediate retraction

by the Ministry of Defense, it is even possible that Rear Admiral Yin's statements and similar statements by other officials are indications that Beijing is preparing to announce that it has reached an agreement with a nation or nations in and around the Gulf of Aden to provide logistics support to PLAN forces deployed to the area. Public statements from Chinese officials regarding this issue suggest an effort to "test the waters," to gauge and shape international reaction to such a move prior to announcement. Chinese officials and academics made similar statements during the fall of 2008 prior to the announcement by Beijing that PLAN ships were deploying to the Gulf of Aden to participate in counterpiracy operations.<sup>4</sup>

Despite public statements indicating that the issue of shore-based logistics support is being debated in China, port calls for rest and replenishment by PLAN ships deployed for counterpiracy operations, negotiation of defense agreements, and military engagement through goodwill cruises and exercises show that a regional support network is already taking shape. It can even be argued that it is no longer an issue of whether China will seek out friendly ports from which to support its forces, because those locations are already being used by the PLAN. For example, Salalah in Oman is serving as a regular supply port for Chinese warships operating in the Gulf of Aden; every ship in the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth rotations called into Salalah for resupply between June 2009 and August 2010 (see map).

At the same time, statements by Chinese officials do not indicate that Beijing is considering building financially and politically costly American-style military bases, with the attendant infrastructure to support thousands of deployed and in some cases permanently assigned personnel. Much of the discussion outside of China regarding future support infrastructure for Chinese forces in the Indian Ocean has revolved around the "string of pearls" strategy that Beijing is alleged to be pursuing. This theory, a creation of a 2004 U.S. Department of Defense contractor study entitled *Energy Futures in Asia*, has since become popular, particularly in the United States and India, and is accepted as fact by many in official and unofficial circles.<sup>5</sup> However, while the study in its entirety is not baseless, certain elements of it have been selectively quoted as evidence of Beijing's strategic intent. This has led to an interpretation of Chinese grand strategy that is often presented with dark overtones hinting at an aggressive reading on Beijing's part of Alfred Thayer Mahan's writings. As part of this strategic construct it is claimed that Beijing is building a comprehensive network of naval bases stretching from southern China to Pakistan. The past several years have seen rampant speculation in the press and even some U.S. government publications regarding future Chinese naval bases at such locations as Gwadar in Pakistan, Sittwe in Burma,

Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and Chittagong in Bangladesh, with only superficial evidence to support such claims.

Despite the furor it has generated, the “string of pearls” does not represent a coordinated strategy on the part of China, and there is no substantive evidence in Chinese sources or elsewhere to support the contentions of commentators, academics, and officials who use it as a baseline for explaining Beijing’s intentions in the Indian Ocean. Reality is shaping up to be quite different. The current debate in China is revolving around the establishment of what are commonly referred to in the U.S. military as “places,” as opposed to bases.<sup>6</sup> This type of strategy involves securing with friendly governments diplomatic agreements allowing access to those nations’ facilities in order to obtain essential supplies, such as fuel, food, and freshwater, for deployed forces.<sup>7</sup> Such agreements can also involve reciprocal guarantees of military support in such areas as training, equipment, and education. One example is the United States–Singapore Memorandum of Understanding, which permits the U.S. Navy access to Changi Naval Base while providing the use of Air Force bases and airspace in the continental United States for training by the Republic of Singapore Air Force. What the Chinese are currently debating is whether deployed PLAN forces need places to which regular access is guaranteed by formal diplomatic agreements, or whether the current ad hoc system of calling in friendly ports when necessary is sufficient for the accomplishment of current and future missions.<sup>8</sup>

### ONGOING DEBATE

China’s stated policy of noninterference is a significant element of its national security policy, and a lack of Chinese military bases abroad is often cited as an example of Beijing’s adherence to its position of noninterference and nonalignment. As the official daily of the Communist Party of China put it in 1999,

China adheres to an independent foreign policy as well as to the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence in developing diplomatic relations and economic and cultural exchanges with other countries. China consistently opposes imperialism, hegemonism, and colonialism, works to strengthen unity with the people of other countries, supports the oppressed nations and the developing countries in their just struggle to win and preserve national independence and develop their national economies, and strives to safeguard world peace and promote the cause of human progress.<sup>9</sup>

Chinese official documents and statements are replete with references to this issue, serving as a not so subtle signal that despite its rise to economic and political prominence, along with its military modernization, China is not a conquering,



imperialistic power along the lines of, the Chinese would say, the United States, the great powers of Europe, or even Japan.<sup>10</sup> China's 2000 white paper on national defense states, "China objects to any country imposing in any form its own political system and ideology on other countries. China does not seek military expansion, nor does it station troops or set up military bases in any foreign country."<sup>11</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed in a 1997 address at the U.S. Army War College by Lieutenant General Li Jijun, then vice president of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Academy of Military Science (AMS): "China has not occupied a single square inch of foreign soil, nor has it possessed any overseas military bases. Furthermore, China has not retained any military presence beyond its own territory."<sup>12</sup> He added, most likely in order to emphasize the differences between China and other, more aggressive foreign powers, "Even though parts of Chinese territory are still occupied by its neighbors, China has shown great restraint and patience as it calls for peaceful solutions to the territorial disputes left by history."<sup>13</sup> More recently, in a June 2009 article Senior Colonel Zhou Chen of AMS stated that while China's new national interests pose challenges to the tradition of not establishing overseas military bases, China "will still not establish a large global network of military bases and station forces in overseas areas on a large scale like some countries do."<sup>14</sup>

Though China's global economic interests are growing and Chinese citizens working abroad are sometimes threatened and even killed, Beijing still avoids basing troops in foreign countries, even where its interests are at risk. Senior Colonel Zhou noted that the new requirements of China's national security strategy pose challenges to the traditional notion of not dispatching soldiers overseas or establishing bases in foreign countries.<sup>15</sup> The policy of noninterference, then, has remained in place as an essential component to China's foreign policy; nonetheless, Beijing has shown a capacity to adjust its definition of noninterference to fit changes in China's security dynamic. One notable example is UN peacekeeping operations. China once criticized such missions as violations of a nation's sovereignty. However, since 1992, when Beijing sent four hundred PLA engineers to Cambodia for peacekeeping duty, over fifteen thousand total Chinese peacekeepers have served abroad, while the policy of noninterference remains in place.<sup>16</sup> In December 2008, shortly before Beijing announced it would send warships to the Gulf of Aden, Pang Zhongying, a professor of international relations at Renmin University, stated, "Nonintervention is the principle of China's foreign policy, which has not changed." He added, however, "China is now trying to balance its old principles and the new reality."<sup>17</sup> In a similar situation, Japan has deployed forces to the Gulf of Aden for counterpiracy patrols and has even signed a status-of-forces agreement with Djibouti securing support facilities for its forces in a

manner that does not violate article 9 of its constitution, which permits the use of military force only in self-defense. Should China sign an agreement guaranteeing access to port facilities by PLAN warships and even a small number of deployed personnel for logistics and administration, Beijing will no doubt go to great lengths to do so consistently with its policy of noninterference. It might emphasize that its forces had been invited by the host country specifically to support Chinese forces engaged in internationally sanctioned missions, such as the international counterpiracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden.

Beijing's noninterference policy aside, there appears to be a debate in official Chinese circles regarding the need to enhance the PLA's ability to support its forces deployed abroad. In December 2008, just before Beijing's announcement that it would deploy ships to the Gulf of Aden, Major General Jin Yinan of the PLA's National Defense University admitted that the lack of bases in the Indian Ocean was a problem, although he expressed confidence in the PLAN's at-sea replenishment capabilities.<sup>18</sup> In February 2009, in what is likely the most forward-leaning statement by any Chinese official, Senior Colonel Dai Xu of the PLA Air Force, an outspoken military strategist, stated that establishing overseas bases is a logical extension of the PLAN mission to the Gulf of Aden and a necessity if China is to protect its overseas interests and participate in peacekeeping, humanitarian, and disaster-relief operations.<sup>19</sup> Senior Colonel Dai even went so far as to declare, "If we make things difficult for ourselves in this matter by maintaining a rigid understanding of the doctrines of nonalignment and the nonstationing of troops abroad, then it will place a lot of constraints on us across the board."<sup>20</sup> Dai's comments were reinforced in May 2009 by Senior Captain Li Jie of the navy, who stated that over the long term China should consider establishing land-based supply facilities in order to conduct its overseas missions. Senior Captain Li discussed the importance of Djibouti to U.S., French, and Japanese forces in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa and suggested that China establish a support base of its own in East Africa, where it has excellent diplomatic relations.<sup>21</sup>

This debate did not receive much attention until late December 2009, when Rear Admiral Yin Zhou, interviewed on China National Radio, asserted that a stable and permanent supply and repair base would be appropriate and that shore-based supply was important for the rest and exercise of sailors, treatment of sick and injured crewmen, and replenishment with fresh fruit, vegetables, and drinking water. He pointed out that other nations, notably the United States and France, already have extensive facilities in the region, including a large presence in Djibouti by both nations.<sup>22</sup> What is noteworthy is that while Rear Admiral Yin's comments have generated a great deal of attention, they were in fact less provocative than those of Senior Colonel Dai and Senior Captain Li. It is clear

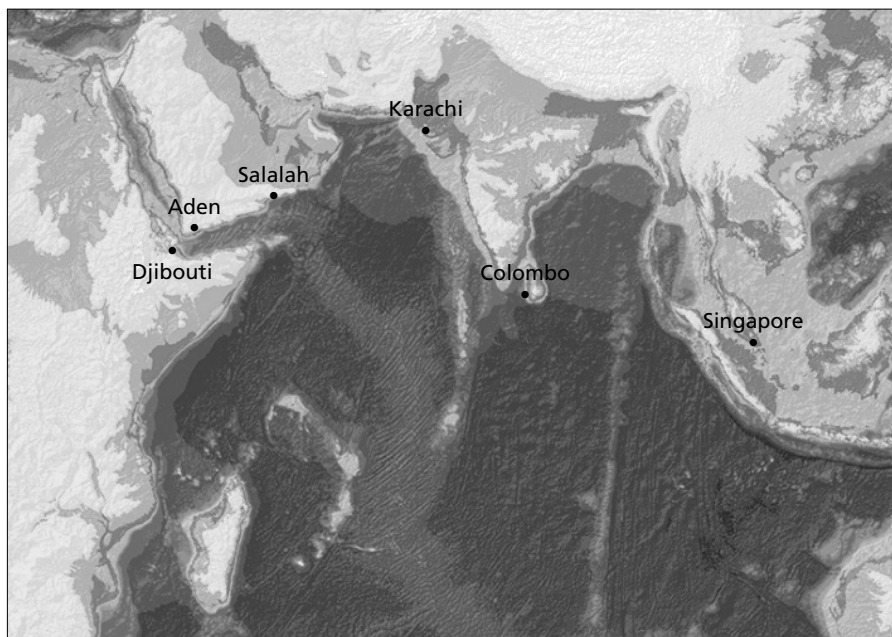
that the admiral was stating his personal opinion on the issue; such a decision, he stipulated, was ultimately for the Chinese Communist Party, the Central Military Commission, and the State Council.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, unlike his colleagues' earlier comments, Rear Admiral Yin's interview was picked up by the international press, and the reaction was both rapid and predictable. The BBC reported the concern of other nations about signs of increasing assertiveness in China's foreign policy; Dr. Arthur Ding, a professor at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, called Rear Admiral Yin's proposal a clear step by Beijing toward the completion of the "string of pearls."<sup>24</sup> The PRC Ministry of Defense immediately issued, on 1 January 2010, a clarification of Rear Admiral Yin's comments, declaring that an overseas supply base was not an urgent concern and that the PLAN would continue to employ its current supply and replenishment system—although, the ministry added, a supply base might be an option for the future.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, other Chinese commentators weighed in on the issue. Senior Captain Li reaffirmed his comments from May 2009 stating that China should consider setting up a supply base, noting that such facilities and arrangements are a common way for navies to ensure that their forces are supplied and their crews are provided opportunities for rest. Jin Canrong, a professor of international relations at Renmin University, dismissed as overreaction the negative responses to the personal views of Rear Admiral Yin. At the same time, he concurred with Yin that China should not rule out an overseas supply base: "China's national interests have extended beyond its border, so it is necessary to have the ability to protect them."<sup>26</sup> The Ministry of Defense on 10 March reiterated Beijing's position that China has no plans to establish overseas military bases; other officials, including the deputy chief of staff of the PLAN, made similar statements.<sup>27</sup>

## PLACES FOR THE PLAN

The ongoing debate in China over whether or not to formalize logistics support agreements for its naval forces in the Indian Ocean reflects the evolution of the PLA's expanding missions in the region. As China maintains a task group of warships off the Horn of Africa to conduct counterpiracy patrols, as well as expand its overall military footprint in the Indian Ocean through such other means as exercises, goodwill cruises, and foreign sales, it also continues to cultivate the commercial and diplomatic ties necessary to sustain its forces deployed abroad. While government officials and academics debate the extent to which China should formalize support arrangements with other nations, a supply network is in fact taking shape. As Professor Shen Dengli of Fudan University states, "Whether the overseas military base has a proper name is not important. What is important is to contact the host countries which would allow our navy soldiers to take a

## PORTS OF CALL



rest.”<sup>28</sup> Whether the PLAN develops its support network through a series of formal agreements that guarantee access or continues to supply its forces as it has been, a support network is developing, and it will continue to grow. The existence of this support network can be seen in the ports in the Indian Ocean where the PLAN has quietly called. The list of these ports is an indicator of not only where the PLAN prefers to replenish its ships and rest its crews but also of where it is likely to develop formal arrangements should it choose to do so. Song Xiaojun, Beijing-based military expert and editor of *舰船知识* (*Naval and Merchant Ships*) magazine, has even stated that the Omani port of Salalah and the Yemeni port of Aden are both excellent supply points due to their locations and the fact that through multiple dialogues China and the host nations have already formed relationships of mutual trust.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Salalah, Oman***

The PLAN ships deployed to the Gulf of Aden have utilized Salalah more than any other port, with nineteen port calls through August 2010, and it can be argued that Salalah is already a “place” for the PLAN in fact if not in name. The PLAN counterpiracy patrol units began using Salalah during the second rotation. Between 21 June and 1 July 2009 the three ships then on duty—*Shenzhen* (DD 167), *Huangshan* (FFG 570), and *Weishanhu* (AOR 887)—made individual port visits there for rest and replenishment. According to Rear Admiral Yao Zhilou, the mission commander of the second PLAN counterpiracy rotation, the ships coordinated their

port calls to ensure that five groups of fifty-four total merchant vessels still received escort over the eleven-day period in which the port visits took place. The port visits to Salalah also represented the first rest ashore for PLAN personnel deployed to the Gulf of Aden. According to the *PLA Daily*, the officers and sailors went on group shopping and sightseeing trips in Salalah and engaged in such recreational activities as tug-of-war and table tennis matches with civilians.<sup>30</sup> Since then the ships of the third counterpiracy rotation called in Salalah during the second half of August 2009, the ships of the fourth counterpiracy rotation called in Salalah in early January 2010, those of the fifth rotation called in Salalah in the first half of April 2010 and in June 2010 as well. The ships of the sixth rotation replenished in Salalah in August 2010, which included the first foreign port call by *Kunlunshan* (LPD 998), the newest and most modern amphibious assault ship in service with the PLAN.<sup>31</sup>

Overall, Oman and China have a stable and positive relationship. China has been the largest importer of Omani oil for several years; oil accounts for over 90 percent of all bilateral trade between the two.<sup>32</sup> Over the past decade, Chinese oil imports from Oman have fluctuated between 250,000 and 300,000 barrels per day, representing over 40 percent of Oman's annual oil exports. As China has diversified its sources of imported oil, Oman's share in China's total imports has decreased significantly since 2000, when it provided 30 percent of China's imported oil.<sup>33</sup> However, China is also looking to Oman as a supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and in September 2008 China National Offshore Oil Corporation signed a master purchase and sale agreement with Qalhat LNG of Oman. China is considered to be one of the fastest-growing LNG markets in the world; its first LNG purchase from Oman was in April 2007, which was also China's first-ever spot-cargo LNG purchase.<sup>34</sup> Although Oman does not represent a significant market for Chinese military hardware, the Omani Royal Guard did purchase fifty WZ-551 armored vehicles from China in 2003.<sup>35</sup>

Given the stable oil trade and growing LNG trade between Oman and China, along with the economic benefits to the host nation of foreign sailors spending time ashore, there is no reason to believe that Oman will not continue to permit PLAN vessels to utilize Salalah as a place for rest and replenishment. In fact, the PLAN's successful use of Salalah suggests that its current system for sustaining its forces is sufficient. Gu Likang, the deputy commander of the fourth counterpiracy task group, even pointed out that the successful resupply of PLAN forces in Salalah is a reflection of the strong support to the deployment of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese embassy, and other agencies, like the China Ocean Shipping Company.<sup>36</sup> However, it should not come as a surprise if current arrangements evolve into a formal agreement. Even if China curtails

or ends its involvement in the counterpiracy patrols, Salalah's status as one of the top containerports in the region and its strategic position at the nexus between the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea—less than a hundred miles from key shipping lanes—make it a useful port for PLAN forces operating in or transiting the Indian Ocean.<sup>37</sup>

As evidence of the enduring geo-economic significance of the Omani coastline, the ports in the Dhofar region of southern Oman (where Salalah is located today) were visited by the fifth, sixth, and seventh of Admiral Zheng He's treasure fleets that sailed the Indian Ocean between 1405 and 1433, during the Ming dynasty.<sup>38</sup> Zheng He's mariners traded silk and porcelain for Arab pharmaceuticals, such as myrrh, aloe, and storax, and an ambassador from Dhofar even traveled to China to pay tribute to the emperor.<sup>39</sup> While the connection between the voyages of Zheng He's ships to Dhofar and the use of Salalah by PLAN warships today is probably nothing more than an interesting historical coincidence, in April 2008 China's ambassador to Oman saw fit to mention the visits by the treasure fleets as evidence of the long history of trade and friendship between the two nations.<sup>40</sup> Further, historical accuracy aside, the official Chinese narrative of the voyages of Zheng He's treasure fleets emphasizes their peaceful nature, their focus on trade and diplomacy, in contrast to European conquest and colonization.<sup>41</sup> Should Beijing pursue a formal arrangement with Oman for the support of PLAN warships operating in the Indian Ocean, there can be no doubt that public statements from Beijing discussing the agreement will cite Zheng He as evidence that the people of Oman and the region at large need not fear the presence of the PLAN in their waters.

### ***Aden, Yemen***

Aden was the first port utilized by PLAN ships during their ongoing deployment to the Gulf of Aden. The initial call was from 21 to 23 February 2009, during the first counterpiracy rotation, when *Weishanhu* loaded diesel fuel, freshwater, and food stores with which to replenish the task force's destroyers.<sup>42</sup> On 25 April 2009, *Weishanhu* made a second visit to Aden to take on stores after the arrival of the second counterpiracy task force, and a third on 23 July 2009 to take on stores prior to returning to China with the *Shenzhen* and *Huangshan*.<sup>43</sup> During the third and fourth counterpiracy rotations, according to press reports, *Qiandaohu* (AOR 886) called into Aden in October 2009 and March 2010, while *Weishanhu* made a five-day port call in Aden beginning on 16 May 2010, during the fifth rotation, and a late July 2010 port call during the sixth rotation.<sup>44</sup>

At first glance, Aden should be an ideal place for the support of PLAN operations in the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean, as it is strategically located at the western end of the Gulf of Aden, near the Bab el Mandeb. As with Oman,

China is a significant trading partner for Yemen. At approximately forty thousand barrels per day, China is the top customer for Yemen's limited oil sales, and the Chinese oil giant Sinopec signed a \$72 million contract with Yemen in January 2005.<sup>45</sup> There are even ancient trade links between the two nations. In the twelfth century, the Muslim merchant Shereef Idrisi noted Chinese junks laden with spices in the port of Aden, and detachments from Zheng He's fifth, sixth, and seventh expeditions visited Aden.<sup>46</sup> Given its internal challenges and need for economic and security assistance, Yemen is probably more than willing to provide support to the PLAN on either a formal or informal basis for as long as the PLAN desires.

Nonetheless, due to the active presence of al-Qa'ida in the area, China likely prefers additional options for supporting PLAN operations in the Indian Ocean. In December 2009 Yemen's foreign minister acknowledged, "Of course there are a number of al-Qa'ida operatives in Yemen including some of their leaders."<sup>47</sup> It is also certain that the December 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* (DDG 67) while docked in Aden is in the thoughts of Chinese leaders charged with planning and executing PLAN operations in that part of the world. Additionally, the December 2009 attempt to attack a Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines flight by Yemen-based al-Qa'ida operatives has probably served as a reminder of the potential dangers of using Yemen as a place from which to support deployed PLAN warships. Senior Captain Yang Weijun, the commanding officer of *Weishanhu*, stated that the primary reason for the expansion of Chinese ashore support operations in Salalah was to explore further methods of replenishment based on the commercial model, but it is likely that concerns over security and stability in Yemen influenced the decision as well.<sup>48</sup> Further reinforcing the likelihood of PLAN skepticism toward Aden are the descriptions in official PLA press reports of the visits as strictly for replenishment, whereas articles detailing port visits to Salalah also describe the recreational opportunities enjoyed by the ships' crews.

In this sense it is no small irony that the PLAN is relearning a lesson of centuries past: in 1432 two of Zheng He's ships attempted to unload cargo in Aden but were unable to do so due to the instability that gripped the great trading port during the waning days of the Rasulid dynasty.<sup>49</sup> While the PLAN will probably continue to employ Aden as a place for the replenishment of its forces operating in the Gulf of Aden, it is unlikely to make Aden its preferred resupply port in the region.

### ***Djibouti***

Unlike Salalah or even Aden, Djibouti may not be an established place for the resupply of Chinese naval forces operating in the Gulf of Aden but it still represents a significant port of call. To date, four PLAN ships engaged in counterpiracy

patrols have called into Djibouti, *Ma'anshan* (FF 525) on 25 January 2010, *Guangzhou* (DDG 168) on 3 May 2010, and *Kulunshan* and *Lanzhou* (DDG 170) in September 2010.<sup>50</sup> In addition to the September 2010 port calls by ships engaged in counterpiracy patrols, in late September 2010 the PLAN's most modern hospital ship, *Anwei* (AH 866), made a highly publicized goodwill port visit to Djibouti, where the ship and its crew provided onshore medical services, as part of its fall 2010 deployment to the Indian Ocean. In public statements on the need for China to set up an overseas supply base to support naval and air forces operating in the Gulf of Aden, both Senior Captain Li Jie and Rear Admiral Yin Zhou discussed the importance of Djibouti. Senior Captain Li even called for the establishment of a facility somewhere in East Africa.<sup>51</sup> In late December 2009, Djibouti's foreign minister traveled to Beijing for a three-day visit to mark the thirtieth anniversary of formal relations between Djibouti and the PRC and for talks aimed at strengthening bilateral relations. On 2 March 2010, a Chinese delegation headed by Major General Li Ning, the defense counselor for the Chinese mission to the European Union, visited the headquarters of European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Somalia in Djibouti.<sup>52</sup>

Djibouti would be an excellent choice as a place for the PLAN, and it should not come as a surprise if its ships begin to visit the East African nation on at least a semiregular basis. A presence in Djibouti would accommodate Beijing's reluctance to appear too forward leaning with regard to the Indian Ocean, because other major powers have already secured access there. France and the United States both maintain substantial forces in the former French colony, and in April 2009, Japan signed a status-of-forces agreement with Djibouti that provides for the support of warships deployed to the Gulf of Aden and permits Japan to base P-3C maritime patrol aircraft there for the counterpiracy mission.<sup>53</sup> The facilities at Djibouti are also utilized by the naval forces of other nations, such as Germany and South Korea. France's Base Aérienne 188 is home to the headquarters of EU NAVFOR Somalia/Operation ATALANTA, the European Union naval force tasked with protecting and escorting merchant ships in the gulf.<sup>54</sup> It would be difficult for governments whose forces are engaged in counterpiracy operations to be critical of any form of bilateral cooperation or agreement that involves the use of Djibouti by the PLAN. Additionally, like Aden, Djibouti is strategically located astride key shipping lanes near the Bab el Mandeb, while unlike Aden it is, given the large multinational military presence there, relatively safe and secure.

One final element that could make Djibouti attractive as a place for the support of PLAN ships operating in the Gulf of Aden is its proximity to Sudan and Ethiopia. At this time, over 40 percent of China's UN peacekeepers are in Sudan, and Chinese oil workers have been killed in both countries. Given the potential



for future instability in East Africa, there will likely be increased public pressure on the Beijing government to protect Chinese citizens abroad. At some point, China could decide to conduct a noncombatant evacuation operation to extract its citizens from Sudan or Ethiopia, either unilaterally or in cooperation with other nations. If this were to happen, even a minimal presence in Djibouti could facilitate the deployment of PLA forces to the region as well as help ensure coordination with the forces of other nations conducting similar operations.

Conversely, despite its advantages it is possible Djibouti will not become the primary resupply port for PLAN forces operating in the Gulf of Aden. The large foreign naval presence in Djibouti could make the PLAN uncomfortable, with one Chinese commentator stating, "They have built military bases with the existence of armed forces. A Chinese supply point would only be a hotel-style peaceful presence. There is no need to be grouped together with them."<sup>55</sup> Given Beijing's desire to present its operations as different from those of the Western powers and their large-scale and almost neo-imperial presence in the area, the PLAN could be ordered to limit the amount of time its ships spend in ports where there is a significant foreign military footprint. Such an approach is consistent with China's white paper *China's National Defense in 2008*, which calls for the PLA to develop cooperative relationships with countries that are nonaligned.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Karachi, Pakistan***

China's investment in the construction of the port of Gwadar in western Pakistan has fueled speculation for almost a decade that Beijing's ultimate goal is to turn the port into a Chinese version of Gibraltar or even Pearl Harbor, a shining jewel in the "string of pearls."<sup>57</sup> But the reality does not come close to matching speculation. First, despite Chinese investment in its construction, in February 2007 management of the port was awarded instead to Port of Singapore Authority, calling into question just how involved China will be in its future.<sup>58</sup> Second, analysis of photographs of Gwadar and commercial satellite imagery available through Google Earth reveals that in comparison to other regional ports it is a rather unimpressive and exposed facility, lying in an underdeveloped part of Pakistan with only a poor road network leading to more developed areas. Third, the Baluchistan region of Pakistan, where Gwadar is located, is rife with instability; Chinese workers have been attacked there on at least three separate occasions. Fourth, the Pakistani press reports that much of the equipment at Gwadar—gantry cranes, navigation lights, a refrigerated container-stacking facility, and harbor tugs—is in dilapidated condition, due to lack of regular maintenance.<sup>59</sup> Beijing's decision in August 2009 to pull out of funding an oil refinery at Gwadar, following a January 2009 decision by the United Arab Emirates to suspend funding for a refinery in the same area, calls into question Islamabad's designs

for a \$12.5 billion oil city in Gwadar, further undermining Gwadar's economic future.<sup>60</sup> Fifth, if Gwadar's near-term commercial viability appears questionable, its military utility is nonexistent. The port terminals occupy a small peninsula connected to the mainland by a narrow land bridge about half a mile wide. Unless China or Pakistan is willing to make the necessary investments in air defenses, command and control, and hardened structures, Gwadar will remain vulnerable to air and missile strikes.<sup>61</sup> Such upgrades would not be necessary if the PLAN desired to use Gwadar only for basic logistics support, but the other factors make it unlikely that the PLAN views it as viable at any level.

For all the hype about Gwadar, it is far more likely that Beijing would send its warships to Karachi, Pakistan's largest port and primary naval base, if it were to seek a facility in Pakistan to support its forces. In its twenty-five years of goodwill cruises and exercises with foreign navies, the PLAN has visited Karachi more often—seven times, including three in the past three years—than any other port. The PLAN is also now a regular participant in the Pakistani-sponsored multilateral AMAN exercises, having sent warships to AMAN '07 and AMAN '09. Additionally, substantial ship construction and repair facilities, including dry docks, are available at the Pakistan Naval Dockyard and the Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KSEW). Karachi is also where the Pakistani navy bases its three Chinese-built F-22P frigates; the fourth, which will also be based at Karachi, is being built by KSEW with Chinese assistance.<sup>62</sup> These warships, which most likely enjoy some degree of parts commonality with PLAN frigates, and extensive repair facilities, make Karachi a strong candidate as a friendly port where China would seek to repair any ships damaged operating in the Indian Ocean. The possibility of PLAN ships seeking repairs at Karachi was stated as fact by Senior Captain Xie Dongpei, a staff officer at PLAN headquarters, in June 2009, while in July 2010 the Pakistani naval chief of staff, Admiral Noman Bashir, stated that Pakistan can provide ports, logistics, and maintenance to the Chinese navy.<sup>63</sup> That Admiral Bashir called attention to Pakistan's ability to provide logistics and maintenance to the PLAN indicates that he was referring to the robust dockyards of Karachi as opposed to the limited facilities of Gwadar. One final advantage offered by Karachi is its proximity to PNS *Mehran*, Pakistan's primary naval aviation facility. The Pakistani navy bases at PNS *Mehran* six Chinese-made Z-9EC helicopters, the aircraft the PLAN primarily employs on its own destroyers and frigates. Should the helicopters of any Chinese ships operating in the Indian Ocean require significant repairs, necessary facilities and spare parts could be found at PNS *Mehran*.

Karachi's distance from the Gulf of Aden, over a thousand nautical miles, makes it unlikely to be utilized by the PLAN for rest and replenishment on a regular basis. However, there is no doubt that PLAN ships will continue to visit

Karachi for goodwill purposes, for bilateral and multilateral exercises, and in transit to and from the Gulf of Aden, as *Huangshan* and *Weishanhu* did on their voyage home in August 2009.<sup>64</sup> Given the close relationship between Beijing and Islamabad, Pakistan will likely grant PLAN ships access to the repair facilities at Karachi if needed.

### ***Colombo, Sri Lanka***

China's relationship with Sri Lanka has received a great deal of attention recently, due to Chinese financing in the construction of the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota and military aid in the fight against the Tamil Tigers, including the early 2008 delivery of six new-build F-7G fighter aircraft.<sup>65</sup> It is even argued that Hambantota, like Gwadar in Pakistan, is one of the key "pearls" that China is developing along the shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean. However, beyond Chinese financing there is little to support this contention except perhaps ancient trade links between China and Sri Lanka. From that standpoint the issue is intriguing, because for centuries Sri Lanka served as a key nexus of China's maritime trade in the Indian Ocean along the "Porcelain Route" (as the maritime counterpart of the Central Asian "Silk Road" is known to historians). Sri Lanka was visited by all seven of Zheng He's treasure fleets, and it is one of the few places where Zheng led troops in combat—against a rebel leader seeking to overthrow the Singhalese ruler of the kingdom of Kotte, with Zheng's intervention ensuring Kotte remained a loyal tributary to the Ming dynasty.<sup>66</sup>

On a map, a Chinese-funded naval base in Sri Lanka looks like a dagger pointed directly at India. In reality, its very proximity to India would make such a base a liability in any serious conflict without substantial air defenses, command-and-control facilities, and hardened infrastructure, which Sri Lanka certainly cannot afford to provide. At the same time a robust base at Hambantota or anywhere else in Sri Lanka would represent a costly investment that would be unnecessary for the support of forces engaged in counterpiracy patrols, peacetime presence missions, or naval diplomacy and would inflame China's already complicated relations with India.

While it is unlikely, for these reasons, that Hambantota will be developed into a naval base, the PLAN is not a stranger to Sri Lanka; Colombo, Sri Lanka's largest port and primary naval base, is becoming a popular mid-Indian Ocean refueling stop for Chinese warships.<sup>67</sup> In 1985, Colombo was one of the ports of call during the PLAN's first foray into the Indian Ocean. More recently, in March 2007, the two *Jiangwei II*-class frigates steaming to Pakistan for AMAN '07, the first multilateral exercise in which the PLAN participated, stopped in Colombo to refuel, on the same day the Sri Lankan president was visiting China.<sup>68</sup> In March 2009, *Guangzhou* also stopped in Colombo to refuel during its voyage to Pakistan for

AMAN '09, and again on its way back to China.<sup>69</sup> Finally, in January 2010 *Wenzhou* (FF 526) made a three-day stop in Colombo after escorting the merchant ship *Dexinhai*, which had recently been freed by pirates off the coast of Somalia. The port call was highlighted by a visit to the ship by both the commander and the chief of staff of the Sri Lankan navy.<sup>70</sup>

Beijing will probably not seek a formal agreement with Sri Lanka for the use of Colombo as a place to replenish its naval forces operating in the Indian Ocean. It is more likely that PLAN ships transiting the Indian Ocean will leverage Beijing's stable and friendly relationship with Sri Lanka to continue using Colombo as a refueling location, in order to establish a presence along key shipping lanes and help sustain positive relations with a key regional ally. Should Beijing pursue a more general agreement with Colombo on use of Sri Lankan port facilities by the PLAN, it will probably be similar to the January 2008 arrangement between China and Singapore calling for increases in exchanges, education opportunities, and port visits.<sup>71</sup> Such an arrangement would be sufficient to support PLAN operations, with the added benefit of strengthening military relations between China and Sri Lanka without needlessly antagonizing India.

### ***Singapore***

In the speculation about future Chinese facilities in the Indian Ocean, Singapore has been largely ignored by pundits and military analysts. This is somewhat puzzling, given Singapore's friendly relations with Beijing and its strategic position on the Straits of Malacca, which Chinese strategists consider a critical gateway to the Indian Ocean. PLAN vessels have made five calls to Changi Naval Base, including the May 2007 participation of a South Sea Fleet *Jiangwei II* frigate in the multilateral exercise IMDEX '07, a December 2009 visit by *Zhoushan* (FFG 529) during its transit home from patrol duty in the Gulf of Aden, and a September 2010 port visit by *Chaohu* (FFG 568) and *Guangzhou* during their transit home from the Gulf of Aden.<sup>72</sup> During their port visit, *Chaohu* and *Guangzhou* exercised with a warship of Singapore's navy. The defense agreement of January 2008 noted above also points to Singapore's close relation with China, and in May 2010 Singapore's prime minister stated his nation would continue to strengthen its military ties with Beijing.<sup>73</sup> In addition to port visits by ships returning from counterpiracy duty, another recent element of strengthening military ties between Singapore and Beijing is a September 2010 exchange visit in the Gulf of Aden between *Kunlunshan* and the Republic of Singapore Navy warship *Endurance* (LPD 207). However, the fact that Singapore also has close relations with the United States puts the island nation in a delicate position. Also, the littoral states of the Straits of Malacca—Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia—are all sensitive to foreign military operations in the vital waterways. Offers from the

United States, Japan, India, and most recently China to assist with naval patrols in the area have been rebuffed.<sup>74</sup> It is thus unlikely that there will be a formal agreement between Beijing and Singapore along the lines of the United States–Singapore Memorandum of Understanding, which guarantees the use of Changi Naval Base, as such a move would alarm Washington. At the same time, there is no reason for Singapore to deny increased use of its facilities to PLAN ships transiting to or from the Indian Ocean or patrolling in the South China Sea. Further, Chinese warships will likely call in Singapore more often, for a combination of goodwill visits, bilateral and multilateral exercises, and fuel. This prospect, combined with good relations with Beijing, a large ethnic Chinese population in the region, and the 2008 defense agreement, should allow the PLAN to establish an increased presence in Singapore in an unobtrusive manner, without objections from the other Malacca littoral states.

### CHINA'S GROWING PLACE IN THE WORLD

The ongoing debate in China and statements from public officials and academics regarding the need for shore-based logistics support for PLAN forces has generated a great deal of attention, as well as confusion. It is clear that China is not seeking to establish large, American-style bases, which for Beijing would be financially and politically costly and of questionable strategic value. China's investment in the construction of commercial port facilities in such locations as Gwadar and Hambantota is presented as evidence that China is seeking to build naval bases in the Indian Ocean. However, converting these facilities into bases, viable in wartime, would require billions of dollars in military equipment and infrastructure. Even then, their exposed positions would make their wartime utility dubious against an enemy equipped with long-range precision-strike capability.

Nonetheless, China is developing in the Indian Ocean a network of, not bases, but “places” in order to support forces deployed for nontraditional security missions like the counterpiracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. Most of these places will be used on an informal basis; the PLAN will continue to rely on strictly ad hoc commercial methods to support its forces, as it has been doing for over a year. Arguably, any port along the Indian Ocean littoral where China enjoys stable and positive relations is a potential “place” in this sense, although factors such as location, internal stability, and recreational opportunities for sailors on liberty will certainly influence decisions on whether, exactly where, and how often PLAN ships visit. The visit to Abu Dhabi by *Ma'anshan* and *Qiandaohu*, the first by PLAN warships to the United Arab Emirates, is evidence of this sort of approach.<sup>75</sup>

At the same time, ports that are important to the PLAN's missions and overall posture in the Indian Ocean—such as Salalah, Aden, Djibouti, Singapore, and

possibly Karachi—could become the subjects of formal agreements that guarantee access and support to PLAN forces operating in and transiting the Indian Ocean, in order to provide secure and regular sources of rest and supply. As pirates operating off of the Horn of Africa expand their attacks, particularly to the south toward the Mozambique Channel, the PLAN, like other navies engaged in counterpiracy patrols, could expand its operating areas. Such a move would likely necessitate an extension of the network of ports the PLAN visits for rest and re-supply, perhaps to Mombasa in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.<sup>76</sup>

The development of a support network by China for its naval forces operating in the Indian Ocean represents a natural outgrowth of the ongoing counterpiracy mission and the PLAN's tentative yet very real steps away from home waters and into the global maritime domain.<sup>77</sup> Beijing's official policy of noninterference is seemingly a stumbling block to formal agreements for logistical support to PLAN ships in the Indian Ocean. However, legal nuance probably can be written into any agreement to ensure consistency with official policy. Just as Japan is tailoring and adjusting its laws governing the employment of its military forces to a changing international dynamic, there is no reason to believe that China cannot and will not seek to achieve a balance between maintaining its policies and principles, on one hand, and on the other adjusting to its growing place in the world.

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#### NOTES

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Navy or Department of Defense.

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# FRANCO-BRITISH RELATIONS AT SEA AND OVERSEAS

## A Tale of Two Navies

*Alexandre Sheldon-Duplaix*

In 2009, financial restrictions forced France to close its naval attaché office in London, the job being transferred to another sailor, the admiral who serves as France's defense attaché in the United Kingdom. Paris's first naval attaché across the Channel had been posted unofficially in 1856 and formally four years later. Back then, the two competing empires in Africa and in the East had many shared interests, be it to keep the Russians out of the Mediterranean and fight the Crimean War, suppress the slave trade in the Gulf of Guinea, open China to their trade, or to work together to protect their nationals and their investments overseas. During the American Civil War, Paris and London had closely coordinated their policies to assess and finally accept the Union blockade against the South. The two navies also planned for a possible confrontation with the North or its strategic partner, Russia, in the aftermath of the Polish insurrection in 1863. At the same time, London was envious of France's famed naval engineer Dupuy de

Lôme and his *Gloire*-type armored frigates. Britain had embarked on an ambitious program to eventually reclaim its leadership in naval technology, while selling to France steam engines and sharing expertise in naval gunnery. As a junior engineer, Dupuy de Lôme had worked in a British shipyard—another example of competition and cooperation altogether.<sup>1</sup>

One hundred fifty years have elapsed, and except for the erosion of British naval might, the relative situations of the two countries and their navies are not all that different. Two future sixty-six-thousand-ton

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*Queen Elizabeth* aircraft carriers should eventually allow the Royal Navy to deploy larger platforms than the single forty-four-thousand-ton French carrier *Charles de Gaulle*. Like the armored frigates of the 1860s, the British carriers were ordered with an urgent concern not to be second to the French in terms of capital ships and tonnage, especially when it comes to choosing a flagship for an allied force.

## TWO OLD COMPETITORS WITH COMPARABLE STRATEGIC INTERESTS

On the strategic level, the situations of the United Kingdom and France are comparable. Their economies are on a par, as are their defense budgets, at £40.4 billion (2.5 percent of gross national product) and €42.52 billion (2.6 percent), respectively. The strengths of British and French militaries are close, at 240,200 and 250,582 men, respectively, including 39,320 and 42,866 for their sea services. Their geostrategic heritages, commitments, and approaches are very similar. As Captain Jean Nicolas Gauthier, France's last naval attaché in London, explains, "Britain and France share the same nostalgia of a lost grandeur and have their own particular views on the world."<sup>2</sup> Both the United Kingdom and France have national interests that justify deploying forces outside of NATO. Their militaries are shaped for force projection on a national basis. Despite London's 1967 vocal withdrawal from "east of Suez" and its focus on NATO, the United Kingdom remains present overseas through the Commonwealth. Outside the United Kingdom, Elizabeth II is the queen regnant of fifteen independent sovereign countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Jamaica, Barbados, the Bahamas, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Antigua and Barbuda. Likewise, France remains politically influential within many of the twenty-eight French-speaking countries.

Other European nations have been increasingly active in Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Indian Ocean. But their actions have been prompted by transatlantic or European Union solidarities, not by those nations' historical interests and commitments. Germany, aside from supporting actively its industry abroad, has no distant strategic issues that would justify projecting its forces outside of an allied operation. The same is true for Spain and Italy, but not for Britain and France.

As recent operations have shown, France and the United Kingdom keep important bases overseas and are committed by strings of military agreements. Cyprus has proved to be a key position for projecting British forces to the Middle East and farther out to Afghanistan. Likewise, the French DOM-TOM—the nation's overseas departments and territories—can play the role of "fixed aircraft

carriers” and effectively provide French forces with logistic bases across the globe. British garrisons are maintained on Ascension Island, Cyprus, Diego Garcia, and the Falklands, and in Belize, Brunei, Canada, Germany, Gibraltar, Kenya, and Qatar. Despite the 1967 withdrawal, Britain remains committed in East Asia by the Five Power Defense Arrangements signed in 1971, whereby the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore will consult each other in the event of external aggression against the latter two. The British military can recruit personnel among the Commonwealth nations, and British servicemen serve in other Commonwealth armed forces. France has military agreements with Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Qatar, Senegal, Togo, and the United Arab Emirates. A traditional player in the Arabian Peninsula, with its military links to Oman, Britain is closely matched there by France, which has a presence in Djibouti—on the Horn of Africa—and in a newly established naval and air base in the United Arab Emirates. Similarly, Britain retains a defense commitment in Belize, to deter Guatemala’s ambitions, while France is an active partner in the West Indies, with naval units based in Martinique that participate alongside the occasional British frigate in the U.S.-led antidrug effort. France and the United Kingdom have intervened together in such distant theaters as East Timor. London remains committed to the defense of the Falkland Islands, while Guyane makes of France a South American neighbor.

### A FRAMEWORK FOR A CLOSER NAVAL RELATION

For all those reasons, a closer Franco-British naval cooperation makes sense. The Royal Navy and the Marine Nationale are the two largest navies in Europe, and they have had for decades a common goal of working together. If it were not for the sad memories of Mers-el-Kébir—when a reluctant British admiral was summoned by Winston Churchill to attack the fleet of an ally who had been forced into an armistice by the stunning defeat of its army—and its aftermath, the two navies would have remained at peace ever since Napoleonic times. For most of those years, the two navies have sailed in neighboring waters, solving problems together. They have also fought five wars as allies, including three together with the United States.

As Captain Gauthier explains, “The relation to the United States is at the heart of the Franco-British naval cooperation.” First, the reference to America enables France to celebrate its last major naval victory, at Chesapeake Bay in 1781, giving a convenient response for Britain’s annual Trafalgar commemoration, where French officers have to outwit their former foes. Second, the relation to the U.S. Navy is strong in both. As Gauthier puts it, each feels like “an older junior brother of the U.S. Navy.” The Royal Navy can bolster the “special

relationship” that exists between these two countries separated by a common language. Britain has always taken pride in its ability to influence the United States. In that connection, the British diplomatic representation in Washington is about ten times more numerous than the French. Nevertheless, gratitude to Lafayette, de Grasse, and Rochambeau and, more recently, sixty years of close naval cooperation, especially in naval aviation, have forged deep connections between the navies of the American and French republics.

If Argentina’s successful French-made Exocet missiles caused popular resentment in the United Kingdom during the 1982 Falklands War, London’s defense secretary at the time praised Paris for its role: “In so many ways [President François] Mitterrand and the French were our greatest allies,” wrote Sir John Nott. France made available to Britain Super Étendard and Mirage aircraft so that Harrier pilots and Royal Navy ships could train against them. Nott also praised the cooperation with the French secret service that had produced “a remarkable worldwide operation to prevent further Exocets being bought by Argentina,” most notably from Peru, Buenos Aires’s strategic partner. In contrast, Nott expressed disappointment at the pressure from the White House and the U.S. State Department to negotiate: “They could not understand that to us any negotiated settlement would have seemed like defeat.”<sup>3</sup> If Nott acknowledged the role of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in supplying vital Sidewinder air-to-air missiles to the British, he seemed disenchanted with the “special relationship”: “For all Margaret Thatcher’s friendship with Ronald Reagan, he remained a West Coast American looking south to Latin America and west to the Pacific. Sometimes, I wondered if he even knew or cared where Europe was.” The British recapture of the Falklands—a very close call—remains the defining accomplishment that to this day justifies procuring aircraft carriers and amphibious ships. Despite (or thanks to) the Exocet, it also showed the value of French support.

In the past fifteen years the Franco-British naval relation has been further strengthened. As a former defense attaché in London, Vice Admiral Yann Tainguy explains, “It is with the Royal Navy that the French Navy has the most structured relation to work effectively.” In 1996, in Saint-Malo, the commanders in chief of both navies signed a letter of intent that set up the framework for this structured naval relation. The agreement covers a wide range of activities including operations, and twenty formal working groups have been established under the direction of the British and French chiefs of naval staff. They cover future aircraft carrier development, operational planning, training between surface fleets, submarines, naval aviation, communications, personnel exchanges, amphibious operations, and antisubmarine, antiair, and antisurface warfare doctrine. An operations cell at the Commander-in-Chief Fleet headquarters at

Northwood is manned by French officers to facilitate liaison and cooperation with the French Navy.<sup>4</sup>

The intent of the agreement was to establish effective cooperation at the working level between the two navies, mainly among midlevel officers. The working groups meet every year, usually in the aftermath of a rugby match between the two navies—a contest won by the French side in 2010. People meet and follow a road map for their discussions. The navies exchange their operational programs, although they do not yet have coordinated burden sharing.

The dialogue has sometimes stumbled on the specificities of both navies. For instance, France has tried to push the relations in terms of common training. France and Germany have developed a joint education system for four to five young officers who spend five years in the other nation finishing their secondary studies and graduating from the naval academy. France and Italy also trade specific courses for officers and petty officers. With the United Kingdom, however, common training and naval education have proved so far nearly impossible, because its system of education is entirely different. British naval officers are recruited after university. Basic naval education lasts only about forty weeks before students earn access to their first positions as naval officers. The best are later retrained to prepare them for longer careers with the appropriate qualifications. The French system remains based on the “Grande École” concept; graduates of the naval academy are expected to serve full careers, with the consequence that French junior officers are usually overqualified for their first assignments. The British system is more open—the first diploma does not matter so much. Forty weeks of training provide the basic seamanship required.

When France held the presidency of the European Union (EU), it tried to establish a military-education exchange similar to the Erasmus study-abroad system that exists among European universities. It worked well with Germany, Italy, and Spain; it failed with the United Kingdom. The plugs just did not fit; the education systems were too different. Captain Philip Stonor, the British assistant defense attaché in Paris, concurs:

We have the challenge of similar but different approaches to the same culture. We are broadly the same people, we have the same motivations but we think in different ways: the Baccalaureate scheme is very Jacobin, very Cartesian: you are told what to do; most fit in; but some don't—that is not British who tend to like diversity. The French system tends to be elitist. But what's the point of having an elite: does it make things work better? The British system is based on a looser more interactive base with a pragmatic approach. If you want to join the Navy, they tell you, go to sea, not sit in a classroom—that way you will learn what you need to do not how you should do it if you ever get out of the classroom.<sup>5</sup>

The combat training and qualification system of the Royal Navy is very demanding, and Britain would not wish to parallel the French, Spanish, or Italian equivalents to certify Her Majesty's ships. On the other hand, France takes advantage of the British system. The Marine Nationale participates in the second level of the JOINT WARRIOR exercises, which take place in Scotland. French submarines attend Perisher, the submariners' command course, and the two silent services exchange officers.

Although all expectations have not been fulfilled, the Saint-Malo mechanism has proved so satisfactory that the two nations' armies and air forces followed this path, signing similar agreements in 1997–98.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, in effect the 1996 naval agreement has been recapitulated at the political level. The two ministers of defense have always asked to be briefed on this cooperation, which remains political in essence.

In this context, the past decade has put the Franco-British relationship to a test. President Jacques Chirac's opposition to the American-British intervention in Iraq provoked a split and a misunderstanding not only in transatlantic relations but also in cross-Channel diplomacy. IRAQI FREEDOM caused a deep rift between the allies. Military relations between the United States and France were nearly suspended, and general officers of each ceased to travel to the other country. The situation did not get to that point between the French and British militaries, but the flow of information was considerably reduced. As a consequence, cooperation became more difficult and France was barred from learning the very important operational lessons of the military operations under way in Iraq.

Ever since, both militaries have known distinct paths of evolution. The French Navy has remained more visible than the Royal Navy, whose seagoing role has been shadowed by ground operations and bad luck. While training the born-again Iraqi navy on the Shatt al Arab and protecting a vital Iraqi offshore platform, a Royal Navy detachment was captured by Iranian Pasdarans during the Easter vacation. This was simply a matter of poor timing, but the incident served poorly the image of the service at a time of budgetary discussion. The usual detractors questioned the usefulness of Royal Navy missions such as those that had led to this embarrassment.

On the other hand, the Royal Marines built up their experience and influence by taking a major role in the Iraq war. They outnumber by far the French naval commandos and Fusiliers Marins, and they constitute a definite specialization of the Royal Navy ground capability that does not exist in France, where the Troupes de Marine belong to the Army.

Despite the 2003 split over Iraq, Paris and London worked very hard for the creation in 2004 of a European Defence Agency (EDA). At the political level the main difference between the two countries lay with the French position

regarding Europe. France supports the view that Europe should develop capabilities to conduct global military operations of its own. Britain and the Royal Navy have always had an inclination toward the American “special relationship.” The United Kingdom has always considered any duplication of existing NATO capabilities as a waste of resources. Paris views Europe’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as having a better chance to address global issues than NATO, with its American dimension. London feels uneasy about combining the CSDP with NATO, while the United States has put forward the three *Ds*: no duplication, no decoupling from the United States or NATO, and no discrimination against non-EU members, such as Turkey.

The purpose of EDA is “to support the Member States and the Council in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the European Security and Defence Policy as it stands now and develops in the future.”<sup>7</sup> Unlike NATO, EDA has a bottom-up approach. The idea is an organization with concentric circles and different levels of entry that would reflect the levels of interest of new members and investments that they would be ready to make. Depending on interest and their financial possibilities, members would proceed toward the inner circle of countries fully committed to developing a certain type of equipment. In this respect, Britain and France seem to be the two most committed of the larger members of EDA.

The purpose of EDA is to help develop a military industrial base and a military capability that can be used to serve the European Union’s strategy and the CSDP, which was created in the aftermath of the Chirac-Blair meeting in Saint-Malo in 1998.

From a British perspective, the core of this effort has been supported by France and the United Kingdom. Germany is also a very important member, but the question has always been whether Germany would go all the way to deploying troops. As a result of Operation ARTEMIS in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, European nations have contemplated a permanent force that would be ready for deployment at any time, like EURFOR, EUROMARFOR, or the Franco-German Brigade.<sup>8</sup> So far, the problem has remained at the national level. Some nations are ready to commit troops and ships but will not pay the costs. Other nations cannot be trusted, because they may back down for political reasons.<sup>9</sup> From a French perspective, however, Paris has always tried to promote the creation of a European Union structure for planning and joint operations, while Britain has resisted duplicating an existing NATO capability.

## THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF INDUSTRIAL SYNERGIES

In an ideal world British and French naval industries should be merged, because the two navies’ needs are identical: aircraft carriers, strategic submarines,



nuclear attack submarines, anti-aircraft destroyers, general-purpose frigates, amphibious assault ships, and seagoing replenishment ships. Both British and French standards for acoustic silencing are much stricter than those of other European nations. In that sense, an ideal consolidation of European naval shipbuilding might include Britain joining France, on the one hand, with Germany merging its capabilities with Italy's, on the other hand. Still, this will most likely never happen.

One French participant refuses to view the termination in 1999 of the Horizon air-defense destroyer program as a failure: "Put the Type 45 *Daring* [(D32), the first Type 45 unit] and the *Forbin* [(D620), French lead ship of the Horizon class] side by side: they just look alike and share the same weapon system. We worked very hard to have a common weapon system and unfortunately we were not able to agree on the combat system. But this is certainly not a failure: we created a wealth of contacts and relations that have been extremely useful for the industry and that could be reactivated at will." Through the Horizon program France learned to write detailed specifications and contracts. In the past, past navy-military procurement procedures were very simple, with the navy putting its requirements very briefly—two hundred pages for the *La Fayette* frigates. With the Horizon written specifications, of six thousand pages, the French Navy transformed its relations with the industry. Aside from this learning experience, cooperation on warship programs is always difficult, because of legitimate national concerns about safeguarding expertise, jobs, and shipyards. But some in France think that both countries could have gone farther. Cooperation on Horizon was rocked by a series of difficulties.

For one, the industrial partners did not have the same status: the then Directorate for Naval Construction (now DCNS) was part of the French state, whereas GEC, its British counterpart, was not a shipyard and belonged to the BAE aerospace group. Some on the French side felt that GEC was unfamiliar with the naval domain. Moreover, the British naval industry was in trouble, having been unable to restructure and cut down the number of its shipyards. More numerous and smaller yards meant duplication and a smaller critical mass that did not fit the ambitious research and development (R&D) effort required for the Horizon program.

The national calendars diverged. With Masurca air-defense missiles reaching the end of their lives and the SM-1 Tartar being less capable of defeating cruise missiles, France initially wanted its Horizon anti-air destroyers by 2004 and had to order them in 1998. The British had already decided to stretch the lives of the Type 42s and had planned to order their Horizon destroyers only in 2000.

The partners were overoptimistic as to the numbers they could afford. Britain wanted twelve units, Italy pretended to buy six, and France had planned on four (to replace altogether the two *Suffren* and the two *Cassard* frigates), for a grand total of twenty-two. Only ten—four Horizon and six Type 45—will come out in the end.

Rolls-Royce's TR21 gas turbine was selected, but it would not be ready in time for the French program.

France and Italy wanted the European Multifunction Phased Array Radar (EMPAR), while the British side supported its own Sampson (an "active electronically scanned array" radar being developed by BAE Systems). Actually Britain was ready to spend more on its R&D, because expertise had been lost due to financial restrictions under Margaret Thatcher. London was hoping to install the Sampson on all twenty-two ships.

At first, Britain was uncertain about the missile itself. Going with Aster would close the door for the SM-3 and Tomahawk, two important weapons for their antitactical-ballistic-missile and land-attack capabilities. The SM-3 and Tomahawk required a broader hull. Although the British did choose Aster, with its sixty-four-cell Silver vertical launch system (VLS), designed by DCN, the Type 45 is broader than the Franco-Italian Horizon and could eventually accommodate, with modifications, the Mark 41 VLS with SM-3 and Tomahawk.

The combat-management system (CMS) seemed, however, to have been the main obstacle. Both France and the United Kingdom wanted to take the lead for the CMS. Initial trouble with the Type 23 CMS had led Britain to show an interest in the French CMS, owned by DCN. Being a public company, DCN could not head the overall program consortium but wanted to lead the CMS. GEC claimed the leadership, while the French partner felt that it was more experienced in this particular area. Transferring DCN's know-how on CMS to GEC, a potential competitor, would not be profitable for France.

In the end, Horizon and its half brother the Type 45 reflect different philosophies and cultures. France accepts a ship into its navy when its weapons and systems have been integrated, tried, and certified. Having an aviation culture, BAE favored an incremental process, as for aircraft prototypes. The first Type 45 was commissioned with its main radar untested and without an electronic warfare suite. Sampson was first tried on the testing barge *Longbow* in 2009, when *Daring* was already in commission. Instead of a CMS, it carries a command-and-control system capable of handling the Principal Anti-Air Missile System. Earlier, the Type 23 frigates also lacked combat-management systems at the beginnings of their lives.

Despite its termination, the Horizon program created a momentum that the two countries tried to use for their aircraft carrier programs. Politically, then-president Jacques Chirac wanted cooperation with Britain. The choice of conventional gas turbines instead of nuclear propulsion (as in *Charles de Gaulle*) made by an interministerial committee proved the French desire to pave the way toward a common design. The French carrier would still have had to produce additional steam for its catapults (which the *Queen Elizabeths* were not supposed to have at first), but the committee had concluded that it was best to have a larger carrier than *Charles de Gaulle*, because future planes would be larger. This also explains why the Franco-British design displaces sixty thousand tons and why *Charles de Gaulle*'s propulsion plant would not be powerful enough for a nuclear variant of what would have been France's much-larger number-two carrier.

The aircraft carrier cultures of the two nations proved surprisingly distinct. In France the aircraft carrier is a warship in itself. The captain is in charge of both the platform and the air group and directs all operations. In the United Kingdom two separate worlds coexist, the platform and the air group. Each world has its own operational life, and there are two hierarchies, one for the ship and one for the air group. This explains why the British carrier design has two islands, with combat information centers in both islands.

The British notion that air operations can be distinct from the ship's operations is seen as heresy on the other side of the Channel. Captain Stonor acknowledges this difference: "We have yet to find the happy balance between the RAF [Royal Air Force] way of operating and Naval procedures. There are two big differences: RAF are very reluctant to do non-diversionary flights when embarked; and the RAF has yet [to] be convinced of the advantages of 'hot refueling.' No doubt for their own good reasons they don't want to do things the Naval way."<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding this philosophical difference, the British architecture has its advantages. Antennas have to be set apart anyway to avoid problems of electromagnetic incompatibility. The two-islands concept is also better for survivability in case of a hit.

The French side argued that building the three hulls (i.e., two British, one French) in Saint-Nazaire would halve the overall costs, but Britain could not let down its own shipyards. In the end both sides made concessions, and the final design showed a commonality of about 80 percent. This meant significant saving, but once again the political tempos did not match. In 2006, one year before the French presidential elections, London was not ready to order. When Britain gave its go-ahead, the French elections were a couple of months away and Paris could not follow suit. The newly elected Nicolas Sarkozy postponed his decision to 2011–12, a move that was confirmed in June 2010. Everything is still possible, but the synergy is lost, at least partially.

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES OUT OF DIFFICULT TIMES

Although the “special relationship” was put to the test back in 2003 in Iraq, where the American ally did not listen to British concerns over the lack of post-war planning, it remains profitable for Britain. As a British source comments, “The best way for the United States to deal with Europe is to use Britain as a tool to apply pressure in return for the British doing their bidding with the Europeans. The British view is: it is a hassle to go through the US Congress etc. . . . but in the end, the net gain is superior: we are better off. And this is currently making Britain reticent towards working closer with Europe.”

Like the French Navy, the Royal Navy is going through difficult times. The defense focus and allocations are going to ground and air operations. Unlike their father, uncles, and granduncles, the royal princes are serving in the British Army and not in the Royal Navy. The sea service awaits the forthcoming 2010 strategic defense review with anxiety, hoping that its carrier-based navy concept will be reaffirmed. The army and the RAF are against the carriers, which compete for funding with their ground operations. But as Captain Stonor explains, “The Icelandic volcano [i.e., the eruptions that intermittently disrupted European air traffic beginning in April 2010] has shown that geographically fixed air bases have, as we always knew, serious limitations. The value of the carrier remains intact; moreover, in Afghanistan, the Allies still use the carriers to support ground operations and we are waiting for the *Charles de Gaulle* at the end of this year.”

Captain Gauthier believes that those difficulties create a window of opportunity for British-French naval cooperation:

British pragmatism should acknowledge that the defense posture of both nations is closely interdependent: we share the same fate. The fact that our two navies operate the whole spectrum of platforms from aircraft carriers to strategic submarines and amphibious assault ships means that if one nation loses one of those components, the other nation will lose a justification to retain it: its public opinion will not understand why this component is still valid if its neighbor has done away with it. Therefore, both nations have to support each other. Everything is possible and everything can be lost.<sup>11</sup>

The British defense review has announced further cuts that should give an incentive to explore mutually advantageous cooperation. Even the Tories now acknowledge that Britain cannot produce all it needs for its defense. Captain Stonor believes that there is “a lot to be gained to try to move towards a British-French research and development effort that Europe has yet to produce.” In his view it would be well to go along with the lines envisaged by Prime Minister David Cameron and President Sarkozy.

The carrier issue is of paramount importance to both navies. Clearly the future of the Royal Navy is at stake. For both Britain and France it is also a matter of credibility in their partnership with the United States. The construction of *Queen Elizabeth II*, Britain's first of the new carrier class, is moving fast. But the prospects for the F-35B short-takeoff-vertical-landing (STOVL) aircraft under development are gloomier every day, with spiraling costs and a small number of participants.

If the F-35B STOVL collapses, the F-35C CTOL (conventional takeoff and landing) or the F-18 would be likely choices for Britain. France might harbor some hopes for the Rafale, especially if Brazil takes it for its own carrier. Through EADS, France is also a partner in the Eurofighter. Making a naval version of the latter might prove too expensive. In any case, the return to a CTOL carrier implies for the Royal Navy a necessity to relearn skills that the United Kingdom originally introduced in carrier aviation. Captain Stonor considers that *Prince of Wales*, the second carrier, could if required still be fitted with a catapult, most likely electromagnetic.

This decision will bring the two nations back to a similar carrier design, opening the door for further cooperation. Suggestions have been made that the two nations could share one of the two British carriers. But they don't seem practical. The United Kingdom will need to train its pilots, and France might be a closer and cheaper option than sending them to the United States. *Charles de Gaulle* has demonstrated its ability to cooperate closely with U.S. aircraft carriers. During recent exchanges, French Rafales have had their engines removed and replaced by French aircraft maintenance teams deployed on American aircraft carriers. There is perhaps a future for trilateral American-British-French cooperation on carriers. Britain might want the French to train their flight-deck personnel, and the United States might view that favorably.

Britain has improved six of its thirteen Type 23 antisubmarine frigates, thanks to the Thales Group's French-made Type 2087 towed passive array. Collaboration with France on Britain's Future Surface Combatant seems unlikely, though. On paper, the Type 26's specifications are closely similar to those of the DCNS's FREMM multimission frigate. But for industrial reasons, Britain has decided to go its own way and turn down a proposal to join the Franco-Italian design. Britain will not buy Aster 15 either. Instead, a new short-range air-defense missile will be developed with MBDA, the multinational missile-systems group. The logic is commercial. The United Kingdom is willing to offer the Type 26 for export. If the British had put Aster 15 on Type 26, they would have had the inconvenience of seeking French and Italian approval before exporting the ship. The Type 26s will also carry Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles, a logical step given that the Royal Navy would not want to have

two different types of cruise missiles in its inventory if it were to buy France's SCALP naval air-launched cruise missile.

France's full reintegration within NATO should favor the development of European interoperable systems. It may find a common ground with Britain through EDA. In the replacement of their replenishment ships, so far Britain and France are going their own ways. In mine-countermeasures vessels, there is a potential area of cooperation, both nations having considerable experience. For drones, France and Britain could cooperate, but BAE has clearly chosen the United States as its partner.

On the operational side, cooperation has always been easier. As Captain Gauthier explains, "We don't always have interoperable systems but we do integrate our forces. At sea you have less borders and more character." NATO has always been the base for Franco-British naval cooperation. As a matter of fact, the return of France to the NATO military organization has been transparent for the Marine Nationale, which works on a daily basis with NATO procedures.

For both Britain and France, the operational priority is to retain their skills. The danger is the focus on certain missions that distract both navies from practicing and retaining some of their important skills, such as antisubmarine warfare. So far, exchanges for naval training have not worked properly. Sources in the French naval industry see a commercial obstacle. Unlike in France, the United Kingdom's naval education is being run by a private company named Flagship, which belongs to BAE, a competitor of DCNS. From that perspective, the lack of training exchanges may explain the difficulties encountered in developing joint programs. Captain Stonor maintains, however, that the main challenge is cultural and not commercial.

Despite those limitations on training exchanges, each country has had, for the past years, seven or eight exchange officers in the other navy. As Captain Gauthier explains, "This is a high mark of mutual confidence to entrust the watch of a major warship to a foreign officer: it creates a network of people who know each other and keep in touch to facilitate mutual understanding while they grow up." The French and British navies are also each providing a frigate to escort the other nation's aircraft carrier during deployments.

Another opportunity came out of an embarrassment. The British and French nuclear ballistic-missiles submarines *Vanguard* and *Triomphant* collided in the Atlantic on 3 February 2009. (Both were submerged and, according to Britain's Ministry of Defence, moving "at very low speed.") The accident made it clear that the two countries did not coordinate their underwater strategic patrols, a fact that Commodore Stephen Saunders, the editor of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, criticized harshly, given the possible consequences.<sup>12</sup> Interviewed by journalists, the French defense minister suggested that both countries could "think about their

patrol zones.”<sup>13</sup> Recent talks are said to have included the idea of “sharing deterrence,” although this may prove politically too sensitive.<sup>14</sup>

On the (metaphorical) ground, British and French forces—including the navies—are again fighting side by side. French naval commandos were active in Afghanistan until 2007, when President Chirac decided on their withdrawal. French naval aviation has been involved on the Afghan theater, with attack aircraft—Super Étendards and Rafales—and airborne-early-warning Hawkeyes operating from *Charles de Gaulle* or from land during the carrier’s yard period. The Ministry of Defence in the United Kingdom is experiencing the stress of long-term ground operations that have been moved from the Iraqi to the Afghan battlegrounds, with ten thousand troops engaged in a tough province. France has smaller forces in Afghanistan, with 3,500. France’s contingent has now gone from the Kabul area to a riskier zone, where it is taking casualties. Sadly, sharing losses also strengthens bonds.

France plays an active role in the antipiracy mission off Somalia. For the Royal Navy, given the limited number of its platforms, the piracy mission was not a priority, but its command-and-control contribution is praised. Under Rear Admiral Philip Jones, the command center at Northwood has been credited with doing a remarkable job in directing ATALANTA, the EU operation against piracy off the Horn of Africa.

The United Kingdom and France are separated by the Channel wherein they work together. Unlike France, Britain has a dedicated coast guard service—the Maritime and Coastguard Agency—and the Royal Navy does not share with the Marine Nationale the mission of safeguarding the maritime domain. But the countries charter together, and share the operating costs of, the tug *Sea Monarch* and are planning together for the security of the London 2012 Olympics.

The past decade has been tough for Franco-British naval relations, with a political split over Iraq and with differing industrial and political agendas that led to the termination of the cooperation on the Horizon program and a failure to build three aircraft carriers together.

France and the United Kingdom have common interests and objectives, but their realization is complicated by decision-making processes that often do not match the political tempos on either side of the Channel. Unifying the European naval landscape has proved impossible so far, despite a promising approach through the European Defence Agency. Thales and MBDA have been able to merge the aerospace sector, but the naval sector remains very much a national symbol—there are no lasting and reliable alliances when it comes to cutting the metal to keep yards working.



On the operational side, cooperation has always been strong. As France's last naval attaché to London summarizes it, "Both navies work well together. We have built up a trusting relationship. We both know that we would support each other in case of necessity." In French eyes, the Royal Navy remains very powerful and very capable. Its training is rigorous, and the French Navy is eager to learn from it. For Britain's part, as the assistant defense attaché in Paris notes, "within Europe, the FR-UK naval relation is moving faster."

At the time of this writing the British government was considering cutting down the size of its fleet in order to save at least one new carrier, with the second being either converted into a helicopter carrier, mothballed upon completion, or discarded. The Trident replacement plans should remain intact. Those prospects should encourage the Royal Navy to increase its interoperability with the French Navy. Fitting a catapult to one of the carriers could be part of that effort. The carrier may receive the less expensive CTOL version of the F-35 and perhaps have the capability to host the French Rafale and American F-18. Senior British officers have already underlined that further reduction of the order of battle would force the Royal Navy to abandon certain missions, such as the Armilla patrols in the Persian Gulf and the Caribbean deployments.

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#### NOTES

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not reflect endorsement by the French Navy or Ministry of Defense.

1. See Alexandre Sheldon-Duplaix, "French Naval Intelligence during the Second Empire: Charles Pigéard Reporting on British and American Shipbuilding (1856–69)," *Mariner's Mirror* 94, no. 4 (2008). Britain transformed its naval attaché office into an assistant defense attaché position, prompting France to close the naval attaché posting to London.
2. Capt. Jean Nicolas Gauthier, interview with author, 10 June 2010.
3. Quoted in George Jones, "How France Helped Us Win Falklands War," *Daily Telegraph*, 13 March 2002.
4. U.K. Defence Ministry, "UK-French Bilateral Defence Cooperation," 6 September 2000 (released as the background to the 6 September 2000 visit by the French defense minister, Alain Richard).
5. Capt. Philip Stonor, interview with author, Paris, 30 June 2010.
6. Arrangements between 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines and the French Army's Troupes de Marine (the 9th Division d'Infanterie de Marine, or DIMA) had been signed in 1995.
7. "Background," *European Defence Agency*, [www.eda.europa.eu/](http://www.eda.europa.eu/).
8. EURFOR (European Force) is a multinational mission deployed to various regions by the EU since 2004; see *Council of the European Union*, [www.consilium.europa.eu/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/). The EUROMARFOR (European Maritime Force) was created by France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain in 1995; see *EUROMARFOR*, [www.euromarfor.org/](http://www.euromarfor.org/). The mechanized Franco-German Brigade was formed in 1987 as part of the Western European Union's Eurocorps.
9. See "Background," *European Defence Agency*, [www.eda.europa.eu/](http://www.eda.europa.eu/).
10. Stonor, interview.



11. Gauthier, interview.
12. Stephen Saunders, "Executive Overview: Fighting Ships," in *Jane's Fighting Ships 2009–2010* (Coulson, Surrey, U.K.: IHS Janes, 2009), p. 29.
13. Charles Platiau, "France's Defence Minister Herve Morin Attends a News Conference in Paris, July 24, 2008," Reuters, 17 February 2009.
14. Stephen Saunders, "Executive Overview: Fighting Ships," *Jane's Fighting Ships*, 29 April 2010, [www4.janes.com/](http://www4.janes.com/).

# ASYMMETRIC WARFARE AT SEA

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## The Naval Battles off Guadalcanal, 1942–1943

*Thomas G. Mahnken*

During the six months between August 1942 and February 1943, the waters around the island of Guadalcanal witnessed an almost constant struggle between the Japanese and American navies. The campaign included more than a half-dozen major battles, many of which occurred at night. Although the U.S. Navy enjoyed a technological advantage over the Imperial Japanese Navy, including its widespread adoption of radar, it lost all but one of the campaign's major engagements.

The Guadalcanal campaign demonstrates that technology alone is no guarantor of victory. In order to exploit advanced technology, military organizations must first develop appropriate operational concepts and organizations. The Japanese navy possessed a coherent tactical system for night fighting, a system that gave it a tremendous advantage over the U.S. Navy despite the latter's widespread use of radar. Both sides suffered from faulty intelligence and poor communication throughout the campaign, yet Japanese forces prevailed in battle after battle, because their concepts gave them a superior awareness of the tactical situation.

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The Guadalcanal campaign is highly relevant today, as the U.S. Navy once again focuses its attention on the western Pacific. First, the service believed before the start of the Pacific War, as it apparently does today in planning a strategy to influence China, that it enjoyed a decisive advantage. In the event, it was surprised by an adversary who was at least as skillful in sea battles as it was during all of 1942. Second, the

campaign demonstrates that tactical competence and technology are both key constituents of competence in battle.

### THE PREWAR MILITARY BALANCE

The American and Japanese navies that clashed during World War II were similar in a number of important respects. Because the United States and Japan saw each other as their most probable adversaries in the years leading up to the war, their navies came to resemble each other. Each planned to fight a war at sea that would culminate in a decisive fleet engagement between battleships. Such similarities, however, masked important differences in the tactics and technology of the two forces. Whereas the U.S. Navy planned to conduct daylight battles, the Imperial Japanese Navy emphasized the tactics and weapons needed to conduct night surface engagements. This approach would give the Japanese a considerable advantage over the Americans during the Guadalcanal campaign.

Geography dictated that any war between Japan and the United States would primarily be maritime. The length of sea lines of communications in the Pacific meant that the side operating nearer its home waters would enjoy a considerable advantage. Although the expanse of the Pacific would render a Japanese attempt to seize Hawaii or attack the west coast of the United States untenable, it would also complicate American efforts to cross the Pacific. The award of Germany's territories in the Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana Islands to Japan at Versailles and Washington's agreement not to fortify its island possessions further as part of the Washington Naval Agreement compounded the difficulty of the task. Japan thus enjoyed a significant geographic advantage in the Central and western Pacific. In the words of the U.S. Joint Army and Navy Board,

The position of Japan is such as to form a continuous strategic barrier of great strength covering almost the entire coast of Eastern Siberia and of China, while the position of its Mandate forms a barrier of considerable depth between the United States and the Philippines. The geographic strength of Japan is its interior position as regards to its outlying possessions, its interior position with regards to Eastern Asia, and its insularity.<sup>1</sup>

Although Japan enjoyed a considerable geographic advantage, the economic balance favored the United States, which possessed an economy nine times larger than Japan's.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, while the United States enjoyed a diverse and robust industrial infrastructure, Japan's was much more limited. In 1940, for example, the United States produced sixty-one million metric tons of ingot steel, compared to 7.5 million tons for Japan.<sup>3</sup> Whereas the United States was largely self-sufficient in key resources, Japan depended heavily on foreign sources of raw materials. Tokyo imported 55 percent of its steel, 45 percent of its iron, and

all of its rubber and nickel.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, approximately 80 percent of its crude and refined oil stocks came from the United States.<sup>5</sup> Whereas Japan received much of its war-supporting materials from the United States, America had no such dependence on Japan. As the Joint Board put it, "The United States is economically strong and well able to prosecute war against Japan, while Japan is exposed to precarious economic conditions in such a war through her vulnerability to economic disruption of her industrial life."<sup>6</sup>

Several sectors of Japanese industry made considerable strides between 1918 and 1941. By 1937, for example, Japanese dockyards were building more than 20 percent of the world's ships, second only to Great Britain's.<sup>7</sup> Tokyo also developed a substantial aircraft industry, first through licensed production of foreign engines and airframes and then by manufacturing a number of increasingly capable indigenous designs.<sup>8</sup> By the outbreak of the Pacific War, Japan was producing military aircraft as good as or better than those of its Western counterparts.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Japanese economy was much smaller than that of the United States, Japan's armed forces enjoyed much greater access to their nation's resources than did the American armed forces. Japanese defense expenditures rose steadily throughout the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> In 1934, for example, defense spending accounted for nearly 44 percent of the national budget, compared to nearly 18 percent for the United States. Arms procurement accounted for nearly two-thirds of the Japanese government's spending on durable goods during the 1930s.<sup>11</sup>

The interwar naval arms-limitation regime constrained the size and shaped the composition of both the American and Japanese navies. The 1922 Washington Naval Agreement limited the United States to eighteen battleships and battle cruisers totaling 525,000 tons and allowed Japan ten battleships and battle cruisers totaling 315,000 tons. The treaty was designed to give Japan sufficient strength to defend itself without threatening U.S. possessions in the Pacific. It forbade the construction of capital ships displacing more than thirty-five thousand tons and mounting guns in excess of sixteen inches. It allowed the United States to possess carriers totaling 135,000 tons and Japan eighty-one thousand tons and either to convert two ships displacing thirty-three thousand tons or less to carriers. While the agreement did not constrain overall tonnage of cruisers, it limited their displacement to ten thousand tons and main armament to eight-inch guns.<sup>12</sup> The United States would retain enough naval power to protect its possessions in the Pacific but not enough to challenge Japan in its home waters.

The 1930 London Naval Agreement completed the Washington treaty's arms-limitation framework, establishing tonnage limits for cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. It allowed Japan to build 70 percent of the cruiser and destroyer

tonnage of the United States, and accorded it parity in submarines. It limited light cruisers to six-inch armament, destroyers to 1,850 tons and 5.1-inch armament, and submarines to two thousand tons.<sup>13</sup>

The possibility of a war with Japan dominated U.S. naval planning during the interwar period.<sup>14</sup> Planners expected that Japan would seize America's possessions in the Far East at the outset of a war, forcing the United States to fight its way across six thousand miles of ocean to reclaim them. The U.S. Navy spent the interwar period trying to solve the operational problems associated with a transpacific naval campaign. As early as 1928, war games at the Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island, showed the balance in a war between the United States and Japan shifting in Tokyo's favor. Over time, the growth of Japanese naval power forced the U.S. Navy to modify its plans: originally envisioning a rapid transpacific lunge as the best way to relieve the Philippines, in 1935 it had adopted a strategy that foresaw the need to wage a long and incremental campaign through the Japanese-held islands of Micronesia.<sup>15</sup>

U.S. naval doctrine emphasized the need to win command of the sea by defeating an enemy fleet in a decisive battle. The battleship was the centerpiece of the interwar navy. In part, this was a by-product of the dominance of the "gun club" of battleship admirals and captains. It was also a reflection of the fact that the battleship was the best way to transport firepower across the Pacific and bring it to bear upon the Japanese fleet. Battleships were able to strike their targets with greater accuracy and at longer range than smaller surface combatants or submarines firing torpedoes. Aircraft of the day lacked the payload to do serious damage to capital ships. As a result, the U.S. Navy judged that its battleships had the greatest opportunity to sink the battleships that formed the core of the Japanese fleet.<sup>16</sup> Other surface combatants supported the battle line: cruisers acted as scouts and protected it against air and surface attack, while destroyers guarded it against submarines and torpedoes. Submarines conducted reconnaissance and attacked enemy combatants.<sup>17</sup>

The U.S. Navy initially used aircraft carriers as scouts and spotters for the battle fleet. It also looked to them to protect the battle line against air attack. Beginning in the late 1920s, however, it began to experiment with using aircraft carriers as the core of an independent striking force. In Fleet Problem IX, of 1929, the carrier *Saratoga* launched two successful strikes against the locks of the Panama Canal. During Fleet Problem X the following year, independent carrier groups operated against battleships.<sup>18</sup> It was not until the destruction of much of the U.S. battle fleet at Pearl Harbor, however, that the U.S. Navy as a whole reluctantly accepted the independent use of carrier air power.

American naval tactics emphasized daylight gunnery battles between capital ships. Navy regulations called on units to deploy in a single tightly spaced

column, which would gain a tactical advantage over an adversary by bringing all of its guns to bear across the enemy's axis of approach, "crossing his T." Ships would open fire at ten thousand yards, a distance that the navy judged to be outside the range of enemy torpedoes and optimum for its own guns.<sup>19</sup>

The U.S. Navy possessed some of the world's best warships. Its battleships were fast and well protected. American cruisers sacrificed speed and armor protection to stay within the ten-thousand-ton limit prescribed by the Washington Naval Agreement while maintaining the ability to wage a transpacific campaign.<sup>20</sup> U.S. submarines were among the best in the world but were armed with torpedoes with defective detonators and with speeds, ranges, and warheads markedly inferior to those of the Japanese.<sup>21</sup>

Funds for naval research and development were scarce before World War II. Research on new technology took second place to maintaining and improving existing equipment.<sup>22</sup> Despite funding limitations, the Naval Research Laboratory designed, and American companies produced, a family of capable surface-search and fire-control radar models in the years before World War II.<sup>23</sup> The Navy's first surface-search radar was installed on the destroyer *Leary* in 1937. The next year, the navy installed the XAF search-radar prototype on the battleship *New York* for operational testing during its 1939 fleet maneuvers in the Caribbean.<sup>24</sup> The XAF became the prototype for a family of long-range air-search sets deployed aboard U.S. warships beginning in 1941 and used throughout much of the war. Over the next two years, the navy installed an improved version of the XAF, the CXAM, on all American carriers, six battleships, five heavy cruisers, and two light cruisers.<sup>25</sup>

The navy also deployed fire-control radar that allowed surface combatants to attack targets at night.<sup>26</sup> The service fielded the CXAS prototype, followed by the FC and FD continuous-tracking radars designed to control both main-battery and antiaircraft fire. By Pearl Harbor, the navy had taken delivery of ten FC and one FD systems.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the United States had operational radar systems that allowed its ships to identify approaching enemy air and surface forces and to direct fire against them at night and in all weather.

The Japanese navy, for its part, placed supreme faith in the decisive fleet encounter as the ultimate arbiter of naval power. The Washington Naval Agreement's ban on new battleship construction forced it to reconsider its heavy emphasis on capital ships and seek ways to offset the U.S. Navy's quantitative advantage. As a result, it adopted a tactical system that emphasized the contribution of cruisers and destroyers.

Because the U.S. Navy enjoyed a 30 percent advantage in tonnage, Japan formulated a strategy of "interception-attribution operations" (*yogeki zengen sakusen*) to wear down the American battle fleet before annihilating it in a decisive battle.

At the outset of hostilities, the Japanese navy would destroy the U.S. Asiatic Fleet and occupy the Philippine Islands and Guam. It would then sortie submarines into the eastern Pacific to monitor the movements of the relief force and harass it on its voyage westward to recover the American possessions. Naval aircraft based in the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands would join the battle as soon as U.S. ships steamed into range. When the Japanese fleet had reduced the Americans to parity or less, it would seek a decisive battle near Japanese home waters. An advance body of cruisers and destroyers supported by fast battleships would conduct a night attack using salvos of long-range torpedoes to weaken and confuse the enemy. At daybreak, the Japanese commander would throw the full weight of his battle line against the American fleet in a bid to annihilate it.<sup>28</sup>

The Japanese navy sought to improve the quality of its fighting forces to offset the U.S. Navy's quantitative superiority. The navy leadership believed that the toughness, morale, and fighting spirit of the Japanese fighting man would give a marked advantage in a war with the United States.<sup>29</sup> To hone their skills, Japanese forces trained ten months out of the year in exercises that were arduous and sometimes fatal.<sup>30</sup> Because exercises emphasized combat at night and in poor weather, crews learned to operate effectively under even the harshest of conditions.

A second way the Japanese navy sought to negate the U.S. Navy's quantitative and technological advantage was by developing a unique tactical system emphasizing long-range gunnery, torpedo firing, and night operations. The Japanese naval staff believed that its ability to defeat the American fleet required ships that could outrange opponents. Striking U.S. ships from beyond their capability to return fire would allow the Japanese force to inflict damage without taking losses of its own. The navy therefore expended considerable effort to increase the range and accuracy of its gunnery, culminating in the design of the *Yamato*-class battleships.<sup>31</sup> By the mid-1930s, for example, the Japanese navy believed that its main-force units had a range advantage of between four and five thousand meters over their American counterparts. With the advent of *Yamato*, the Japanese Naval Staff College estimated that Japan's battleships could track the American fleet at forty thousand meters (21.5 miles) and open fire at approximately thirty-four thousand meters, more than three times the preferred U.S. combat range.<sup>32</sup>

The navy also developed the Type 93 oxygen-propelled torpedo, also known as the Long Lance, a weapon with a larger warhead, greater speed, and longer range than contemporary American and British models. The weapon was very large, with a weight of 2,700 kilograms (nearly three tons), a diameter of sixty-one centimeters (twenty-four inches), a length of some nine meters, and a payload of nearly five hundred kilograms (over a thousand pounds) of

explosive. The torpedo was capable of speeds up to forty-eight knots and ranges up to forty thousand meters. Fueled by high-pressure oxygen, it left virtually no wake.<sup>33</sup> In the mid-1930s, the navy equipped all eighteen of its heavy cruisers, some light cruisers, and destroyers from the *Hatsuharu* class on with launchers for the Long Lance. Beginning in 1938, it reconstructed the light cruisers *Oi* and *Kitakami* as “torpedo cruisers,” carrying forty and thirty-two torpedo launchers, respectively.<sup>34</sup>

The Japanese navy also perfected a tactical system for night fighting.<sup>35</sup> In 1924, it began to form dedicated night-attack units composed of destroyer squadrons led by light cruisers. In 1929, the Combined Fleet created a night-battle force under the control of a heavy-cruiser-squadron commander.<sup>36</sup> In contrast to American tactics, which called for ships to deploy in a single column, Japanese ships formed multiple short columns, often with destroyers positioned ahead of the main force to prevent ambush. On detecting the enemy, the Japanese destroyers would close, pivot, fire torpedoes, and then turn away.<sup>37</sup> To exploit the characteristics of the Long Lance, the Japanese navy developed the tactic of long-distance concealed firing (*enkyori ommitsu hassha*), which called for cruisers to launch between 120 and two hundred of the torpedoes at a distance of at least twenty thousand meters from the enemy battle line.<sup>38</sup> Only after the torpedoes had been launched would ships resort to gunfire, and when they did they would minimize use of searchlights, to prevent enemy ships from spotting them.<sup>39</sup> Such tactics could be extremely effective. During the battle of the Java Sea, Japanese torpedo attacks dealt Allied forces a severe defeat.<sup>40</sup> During the Solomons campaign, Japanese torpedo barrages hit their targets as much as 20 percent of the time.<sup>41</sup>

The Japanese navy’s doctrine and training produced a cadre of officers and enlisted men who were skilled in night torpedo combat. The navy trained sailors with superior night vision to be lookouts. Equipped with powerful specialized binoculars, they could detect a ship at eight thousand meters on a dark night.<sup>42</sup> Many of the navy’s top officers were torpedo experts, including admirals Nagumo Chuichi and Ozawa Jisaburo. At the outbreak of the war, most torpedo craft were under the command of qualified experts. As Rear Admiral Tanaka Raizo later wrote, “My division commanders and skippers were brilliant torpedo experts, and from top to bottom the training and discipline of crews was flawless. Operational orders could be conveyed by the simplest of signals, and they were never misunderstood.”<sup>43</sup>

U.S. naval intelligence understood the Imperial Japanese Navy’s emphasis upon night combat. The Office of Naval Intelligence’s monograph on Japan noted that



the Japanese Navy places great emphasis on training for night operations. The Japanese are of the opinion that, at night, many of the disadvantages of having inferior materiel disappear and that spirit and morale—in which they believe they excel—combined with training and the ability to cooperate and coordinate will give them a decided advantage over an enemy fleet.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, war games held at the Naval War College demonstrated the devastating effect of night torpedo attacks. During one such game, two ORANGE (Japanese) night attacks resulted in the loss of a BLUE (American) battleship and aircraft carrier, damage to two more battleships, and loss of or damage to twelve heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and thirty-one destroyers.<sup>45</sup>

Despite these warnings, the U.S. Navy remained largely unprepared for night combat. Its 1934 *War Instructions* warned, “At night the superior or equal force risks forfeiture of its superiority or equality of its most valuable asset, its coordinated hitting power.”<sup>46</sup> However, the navy lacked the doctrine and organization necessary to conduct operations at night. It concentrated upon defensive combat at night, in stark contrast to the Japanese navy’s emphasis upon offensive operations.<sup>47</sup>

During the 1920s the Japanese navy, like its American counterpart, planned to employ carrier aircraft for air defense of the battle fleet, for reconnaissance, and as a means of wearing down the U.S. fleet in preparation for a major surface engagement. In the 1930s, however, naval air doctrine began to shift away from aerial scouting and reconnaissance and toward the idea of using aircraft to attack enemy fleet units. By the middle of the decade, a preemptive strike upon the enemy carrier force had become the focus of naval air exercises.<sup>48</sup> In April 1941, the Japanese formed the First Air Fleet, to centralize control of the carrier force and to separate carrier aviation from land-based naval air force.<sup>49</sup>

Japan’s naval shipbuilding industry grew to maturity in the decades before World War II. Before 1915, British yards built most of the Japanese navy’s ships. By the late 1920s, however, Japanese shipyards began to launch a series of innovative ship designs.<sup>50</sup> Faced with the Washington Naval Agreement’s ban on capital-ship construction, the Japanese devoted considerable effort to achieving qualitative superiority over the United States. As one former naval constructor noted, Japan “labored to produce vessels that would, type for type, be individually superior to those of the hypothetical enemy, even if by a single gun or torpedo tube or by a single knot of speed.”<sup>51</sup>

Japan built cruisers that were fast and heavily armed. They were designed to be all-purpose ships, a substitute for the battleships the Washington Naval Agreement limited. Unlike their counterparts in the U.S. Navy, for example, Japanese cruisers mounted torpedo tubes. The seven-thousand-ton *Furutaka* class,

for example, was armed with six eight-inch guns and twelve twenty-four-inch torpedo tubes.

Japanese destroyers were the largest and most powerful in the world. The units of the *Fubuki* class, built between 1926 and 1931, were the most advanced of their day. With a 390-foot length and official displacement of 1,680 standard tons, they were considerably larger than their American and British counterparts. Moreover, they were armed with six five-inch guns mounted in weather-proof housings and eighteen twenty-four-inch torpedoes arranged to allow rapid salvo fire.<sup>52</sup> Whereas American destroyers were designed to perform a mixture of defensive and offensive missions, Japanese ships were optimized for attack. Destroyer flotillas, positioned ahead of the van or abaft the rear of the main fleet, were to break through an enemy screen and attack the main body of the fleet to sink, cripple, or confuse as many capital ships as possible.

Japanese designs tended to pack too much armament, speed, and protection into small hulls. Cruiser and destroyer designs often suffered problems with structural integrity. Indeed, the navy had to reconstruct the ships of several classes to improve their seaworthiness.

Limited technological resources and fiscal stringency forced the Japanese navy to focus its research and development efforts upon technologies associated with its concepts of operations. These fields included optics, illumination, and torpedoes, where Japan led the United States. However, it trailed in others. Communication among aircraft was one shortfall: Japanese airborne radio was unreliable and prone to interference. As a result, fighter pilots often relied upon hand semaphore or prearranged signal flares to coordinate their action.

Radar was another weakness. Japan conducted little research or development on radar before the outbreak of the Pacific War. Official indifference, haphazard mobilization of scientific talent, and an absence of interservice cooperation further delayed its introduction. As a result, the navy had no search or fire-control radar at the outset of the war.<sup>53</sup> It produced radar sets during the war, but they were relatively unsophisticated and suffered from low power.<sup>54</sup>

High-quality manpower was essential if Japan was to offset the quantitative superiority of the U.S. Navy. The armed forces were a respected part of society, and military service was popular. The navy was manned mostly by volunteers, and reenlistment rates were high. As a result, the navy maintained a cadre of seasoned veterans.<sup>55</sup> It also trained hard, following a seven-day workweek.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, the Japanese naval officer corps displayed a number of serious weaknesses, including the absence of independent judgment in the average officer, lack of assertiveness, and a promotion system that emphasized seniority over capability.<sup>57</sup>

## THE GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN

The Guadalcanal campaign was the first sustained series of battles between the American and Japanese navies. Beginning one month after the United States turned back Japan's attempt to invade Midway, the invasion of Guadalcanal was the first American effort to reoccupy Japanese territory. The campaign represented a clash between fleets trained and equipped to execute very different tactical systems. U.S. commanders were often unable to translate their advantage in radar technology into an understanding of the tactical situation. Japanese units, by contrast, repeatedly achieved a high level of tactical situational awareness—not because they possessed superior technology but because they had a coherent system of night-fighting tactics.

The campaign began with the Japanese occupation of Tulagi, near the southeast corner of the Solomon island chain, on 2 May 1942, for use as a seaplane base. In mid-June, the Japanese dispatched a force of some two thousand engineers and laborers to neighboring Guadalcanal to build an airfield.<sup>58</sup> By occupying the islands, they would be able to disrupt the sea lines of communications connecting the United States and Australia. The island also represented a stepping-stone toward Australia. The Americans learned of the Japanese occupation of Tulagi and Guadalcanal, and on 2 July the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to launch Operation WATCHTOWER to recover the islands. Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, commander of the South Pacific Area (COMSOPAC), was given command of the effort. Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher led an expeditionary force that included three of the navy's four aircraft carriers, the battleship *North Carolina*, and a force of cruisers and destroyers. Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner commanded the amphibious force, which included Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift's 1st Marine Division, embarked upon fifteen transports.<sup>59</sup>

On 7 August, eleven thousand Marines landed on Guadalcanal and Tulagi, taking the Japanese defenders by surprise. By evening the Guadalcanal invasion force had overrun the defenders and occupied the unfinished airfield. Two days later the Marines wrested control of Tulagi from the Japanese. Although Fletcher had promised to remain in the area for forty-eight hours, he withdrew to the southeast on the afternoon of 8 August due to concern over the possibility of an air attack.

Vice Admiral Mikawa Gunichi, commander in chief of the newly formed Eighth Fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy's Outer South Seas Force, at Rabaul, was responsible for dislodging the U.S. force. Mikawa's fleet consisted of the heavy cruisers *Chokai*, *Aoba*, *Kako*, *Kinugasa*, and *Furutaka*; the light cruisers *Tenryu* and *Yubari*; and the destroyer *Yunagi*. Mikawa planned to launch a night attack on the Guadalcanal invasion force, breaking through the enemy screen and sinking Turner's transports.<sup>60</sup>

Suspecting a Japanese response to the assault, on 8 August American and Australian patrol aircraft reconnoitered the waters around Guadalcanal. An Australian aircraft spotted Mikawa's force but incorrectly reported that the column included three cruisers, three destroyers, and two seaplane tenders. Another sighted the force as it headed south through the Bougainville Strait but incorrectly identified it. No aircraft patrolled New Georgia Sound, the avenue through which Mikawa's force advanced. American radio intelligence intercepted a message from Mikawa stating that he was planning to attack an enemy convoy near Guadalcanal, but analysts did not decrypt the message until 23 August.<sup>61</sup> Possessing inaccurate and conflicting intelligence, therefore, Turner concluded that a Japanese seaplane-tender force was somewhere to the north. He assumed—reasonably, though incorrectly—that such a force would not make a night attack.

Three groups of ships patrolled the western entrance of the sound between Florida and Guadalcanal Islands, where Turner's transports lay at anchor. The Northern Force, composed of three heavy cruisers and two destroyers, blocked the western approaches of the sound. The Southern Force, consisting of three heavy cruisers and two destroyers, was stationed to prevent the Japanese from entering the sound between Cape Esperance and Savo Island. The Eastern Force, of two light cruisers and two destroyers, covered the eastern approach to the sound. Two destroyers equipped with radar, *Blue* and *Ralph Talbot*, formed a picket line to the northwest.

None of these vessels spotted Mikawa's column as it steamed southeast through intermittent squalls on a dark, humid night. The Japanese ships passed unseen through the radar picket and entered the sound south of Savo Island. Mikawa, aboard *Chokai*, spotted the silhouettes of the American cruiser *Chicago* and the Australian cruiser *Canberra* of the Southern Force and opened fire, first with torpedoes and then with guns. The ships, illuminated by flares dropped from Mikawa's floatplanes, took heavy fire. Two torpedoes and more than twenty-four shells struck *Canberra*, which was barely able to fire two torpedoes and several shells before stopping dead in the water, aflame and sinking. A torpedo severed part of *Chicago*'s bow, and a shell knocked off part of its foremast. The ship's commanding officer completely miscalculated the location of Mikawa's force, steering his ship away from the battle, and failed to alert the Northern Force.

Mikawa's column next swung left around Savo Island and headed for the Northern Force. Although the engagement had been going on more than five minutes, the Northern Force was completely unaware that it was under attack until the heavy cruiser *Aoba* illuminated the cruiser *Quincy* with its searchlights. The cruiser *Astoria*, hit amidships by one of *Chokai*'s eight-inch shells, burst into

flames. *Quincy* and *Vincennes* also sustained heavy damage. With burning ships silhouetting the American force, the Japanese turned off their searchlights, making it difficult for the Americans to locate them. The Northern Force's screening destroyer, *Wilson*, chased what appeared to be an enemy ship for some time, only to discover it was the destroyer *Bagley* of the Southern Force. The force's other destroyer, *Helm*, never sighted any enemy ships.

After savaging the Northern and Southern Forces, Mikawa elected to retire rather than attacking Turner's exposed transports. His ships had expended their torpedoes and were scattered. He was also concerned about exposing his force to daylight air attack, unaware that Fletcher's carriers were too far to the south to strike his ships. As Mikawa withdrew, his ships encountered and damaged *Ralph Talbot*. He left behind four Allied cruisers sunk or sinking and two destroyers and one cruiser damaged. The U.S. Navy's losses included 1,023 killed and 709 wounded, its worst defeat since the War of 1812.

The occupation of Guadalcanal marked only the beginning of the campaign. The battle for the island went on for almost half a year, exacting heavy tolls upon both sides. Neither the Americans nor the Japanese proved willing to give up Guadalcanal, nor was either strong enough to defeat the other. The Japanese believed that the island had to be reinforced and held, while the Americans had to eliminate the Japanese army units there and supply and reinforce the Marine garrison.

In this campaign the U.S. forces, although they enjoyed technological superiority, lacked continuity of leadership. No American officer ever commanded the same force in more than two battles. As a result, there were few opportunities to incorporate lessons into operations. Indeed, the navy repeatedly employed tactics that put it at a considerable disadvantage in night engagements. The Japanese navy not only possessed a coherent tactical system for night combat but also enjoyed much greater continuity of command. As a result, it was able to use combat experience to modify and improve upon its prewar doctrine.

The Japanese began launching frequent air raids on Guadalcanal from Rabaul. Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters, operating at the very edge of their performance envelopes, escorted long-range bombers on missions against the island's airstrip, dubbed Henderson Field by the Americans. Rear Admiral Tanaka's 2nd Destroyer Squadron also began making nighttime runs down "the Slot," the channel between Santa Isabel and New Georgia Islands, to land small detachments and bombard the airfield. These missions, known as the "Tokyo Express," were a constant feature of the Guadalcanal campaign. During one of these runs, on the night of 21–22 August, a torpedo from the destroyer *Kawakaze* struck the destroyer *Blue*, which had to be scuttled. Although *Blue* possessed an SC surface-search radar, the Japanese lookouts spotted the American destroyer first.<sup>62</sup>

At his fleet's anchorage at Truk, Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku began to prepare for a major battle against the U.S. Navy. His plan called for the Combined Fleet to escort a convoy carrying General Kawaguchi Kiyotake's 35th Brigade to Guadalcanal. It would also attempt to engage and defeat Allied naval forces so as to remove the threat to future reinforcement attempts. Yamamoto's plan called for Admiral Nagumo's carrier force, under the protection of Rear Admiral Abe Hiroaki's Vanguard Force, to strike Allied surface combatants. Nagumo's aircraft, together with the Vanguard Force and Vice Admiral Kondo Nobutake's Support Force, would then mop up any survivors.

On 23 August, the Combined Fleet sortied from Truk. The next day, it met Fletcher's Task Force 61 in the battle of the Eastern Solomons.<sup>63</sup> Fletcher had received reports indicating that Japanese carriers were nearby, but he had not believed them. Moreover, atmospheric conditions hampered radio reception throughout the battle, complicating his ability to control his task force. The battle opened when aircraft from the small carrier *Ryujo* struck Henderson Field. Warned by coast watchers, the Marines decimated the attackers. Aircraft from *Enterprise* and *Saratoga* located and struck *Ryujo*, which sank that evening. Meanwhile, the carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* launched a counterstrike against the American carrier force. Although *Enterprise* sustained three bomb hits, it suffered no hull damage. A second Japanese attack failed to locate the task force, due to a pilot's plotting error. Spared further damage, Fletcher withdrew to the south with his carriers.

An American PBY flying boat spotted Rear Admiral Tanaka's convoy carrying the Yokosuka 5th Special Landing Force in the early morning hours of 25 August.<sup>64</sup> Aircraft from Guadalcanal and B-17 bombers from the island of Espiritu Santo surprised the convoy, damaging the light cruiser *Jintsu* and the transport *Kinryu Maru*. A second wave of B-17s bombed the destroyer *Mutsuki* as it attempted to rescue troops from the damaged transport. Tanaka found the air attack so intense that he withdrew his remaining ships to their anchorage in the Shortland Islands.

Over the next two months, each side tried to reinforce its garrison on Guadalcanal. The Japanese army brought in troops from China, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, for its part, decided to commit a regiment of the Americal Division to defend the island. At night, Tanaka's Tokyo Express brought in supplies, bombarded Henderson Field, and attacked U.S. naval forces. During daylight hours, aircraft from Guadalcanal dominated the sea around the island. Nonetheless, Japanese planes from Rabaul launched bombing raids on the island almost daily; during September, for example, they flew an average of twenty-nine missions per day.<sup>65</sup> U.S. Marine F4F Wildcats and Army Air Forces P-40 Warhawks were no match for the Zeros.

Moreover, the army was reluctant to allocate P-38 Lightnings to the South Pacific. Marine aviators, often cued by coast watchers, employed hit-and-run tactics to inflict heavy casualties on the Japanese.

On the night of 11–12 October, Japanese and American reinforcement convoys clashed in the battle of Cape Esperance.<sup>66</sup> The Japanese force, commanded by Rear Admiral Goto Aritomo, consisted of three heavy cruisers and two destroyers escorting two seaplane carriers and six destroyers with a considerable part of the Imperial Japanese Army's 2nd Division embarked. Goto planned to bombard Henderson Field with the guns of his cruisers and destroyers while also landing the 2nd Division to reinforce the Japanese garrison on the island. Lying in wait was Rear Admiral Norman Scott, who sought to derail the Tokyo Express while delivering the 164th Regiment of the Americal Division to Guadalcanal. Scott's force included the aircraft carrier *Hornet*, the new battleship *Washington*, and a force of cruisers and destroyers. Scott had studied previous engagements with the Japanese and had carefully trained his force in night-fighting tactics. His preparations paid off in the ensuing battle.

Goto was unaware of the presence of the American fleet as he steamed toward Guadalcanal. By contrast, long-range air reconnaissance gave Scott accurate intelligence regarding the position and advance of the Japanese force. He did not, however, fully exploit its advantage. The light cruiser *Helena* detected Goto's force with its SG surface-search radar at a range of fourteen nautical miles but failed to report its location for nearly twenty minutes, until it was within six nautical miles of Scott's ships. As the fleets closed to two and a half miles, *Helena's* commanding officer asked permission to open fire. Scott misinterpreted the request and unknowingly gave the go-ahead. *Helena's* fire took both the Japanese and the rest of the American force by surprise. During the ensuing engagement, Scott's force sank the cruiser *Fubuki* and badly damaged *Furutaka* and *Aoba*. One shell struck *Aoba's* bridge, killing Goto and most of his staff. The Japanese force withdrew, covering its retreat by pouring heavy fire on the cruiser *Boise*. Both the Japanese and the American convoys landed their troops on Guadalcanal. The battle was one of the few night engagements the Japanese lost. Only confused communications among Scott's ships kept the battle from becoming a Japanese disaster.

With its 2nd Division on Guadalcanal, the Japanese high command determined to recapture the island. Beginning 13 October, the army and navy launched a coordinated attack on Henderson Field. During the day the field was attacked by bombers and shelled by howitzers that had been landed during the battle of Cape Esperance. That night, the battleships *Kongo* and *Haruna* fired some nine hundred shells on the airfield. The next night Mikawa's cruisers joined the fray, firing 752 eight-inch rounds onto the island, followed by 926



heavy-caliber rounds the following evening.<sup>67</sup> Although the situation at the airfield was desperate, the Marines held. Indeed, the few aircraft that survived the bombardment, backed by B-17s flying from rear bases, sank six of Tanaka's supply ships. On 22 October, the Japanese launched a ground offensive designed to envelop the airfield. After four days of bitter fighting, it halted without having dislodged the Marines.

With the army's failure to recapture Guadalcanal, Yamamoto made another attempt to destroy U.S. naval forces supporting the island. He dispatched several task forces from Truk, including a battleship force and the carriers *Shokaku*, *Zuikaku*, *Zuiho*, *Junyo*, and *Hiyo*.<sup>68</sup>

Yamamoto faced a new group of American commanders. Admiral Chester Nimitz had found Ghormley wanting and replaced him with Vice Admiral William F. Halsey as COMSOPAC; Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid took Fletcher's place as carrier commander. Kinkaid's Task Force 16 included the carrier *Enterprise* and a support force composed of the battleship *South Dakota*, heavy cruiser *Portland*, antiaircraft cruiser *San Juan*, and eight destroyers. Rear Admiral George D. Murray's Task Force 17 included the carrier *Hornet*, heavy cruisers *Northampton* and *Pensacola*, antiaircraft cruisers *San Diego* and *Juneau*, and six destroyers. The Japanese outnumbered the Americans in warships, tonnage, and aircraft, but the Americans possessed the advantages of Henderson Field and superior intelligence information.

Allied aircraft first sighted the Combined Fleet at sea on 13 October. These flights located four different forces, three of which were a carrier group, a scouting force of cruisers and destroyers, and a battleship force sent to bombard Henderson Field. Aircraft spotted the task force again on 15, 22, and 24 October. As a result, the Americans possessed an accurate view of the basic tactical disposition of the Japanese force.<sup>69</sup>

The two fleets met in the battle of the Santa Cruz Islands on 26 October.<sup>70</sup> The engagement began when two pilots from *Enterprise* located and attacked the unsuspecting light carrier *Zuiho*. One bomb penetrated its flight deck, forcing it to return to Truk for repairs. The Japanese, however, had learned some of the lessons of Midway. Although the Americans struck first, the Japanese this time were able to launch two waves of planes in the time it took the Americans to launch one. The first Japanese attack wave concentrated upon *Hornet*, causing damage that left the carrier dead in the water; subsequent attacks sank it. The second wave struck *Enterprise*. That carrier, however, equipped with newly installed antiaircraft guns, took only two hits and remained in service.

The Japanese did not escape *Hornet's* air group, which discovered and attacked *Shokaku*, hitting its flight deck with four thousand-pound bombs. Such damage had been sufficient to sink carriers at Midway, but the Japanese had now



learned to secure ordnance, drain gasoline lines, and keep fire hoses at the ready. As a result, while the carrier's flight deck was disabled and communications were lost, its engines remained functional and its hull intact. *Hornet's* second attack struck the Vanguard Force, crippling the heavy cruiser *Chikuma* and damaging the destroyer *Teruzuki*.

The U.S. Navy sustained heavy damage, with a carrier and a destroyer sunk and another carrier, battleship, heavy cruiser, and antiaircraft light cruiser damaged. With the loss of *Hornet*, *Enterprise* became the only carrier capable of staging aircraft bound for Guadalcanal. The Japanese had also suffered extensive losses, with three carriers damaged and a heavy cruiser and two destroyers damaged. During the battle, the Americans had been handicapped by poor communication: they had possessed all the information they needed to make a successful strike, but the right people had not received it. On the other hand, the growing antiaircraft defenses of U.S. combatants had prevented further damage. In the months to come, the navy would further increase the antiaircraft armament of its ships.

Between August and November, the two sides carried out massive troop buildups on Guadalcanal. On 7 August there were ten thousand Americans and 2,200 Japanese troops on the island. By 12 November, twenty-nine thousand Americans faced thirty thousand Japanese.<sup>71</sup> In early November, U.S. intelligence began detecting preparations for another Japanese attack. The Japanese planned to launch heavy aircraft strikes and a naval bombardment before landing reinforcements on the island. On 9 November, American intelligence intercepted and decrypted Yamamoto's operations order for the attack.<sup>72</sup> Halsey dispatched Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan's Support Group of five cruisers and eight destroyers to meet the Japanese.

On 13–15 November, the two fleets met in the naval battle of Guadalcanal.<sup>73</sup> The Bombardment Force, under Abe (now a vice admiral) had passed through an intense tropical storm as it steamed south toward Guadalcanal on the night of 12–13 November. His force included the battleships *Hiei* and *Kirishima*, a light cruiser, and six destroyers. The ships' guns were loaded with antipersonnel high-explosive shells, with which to bombard Henderson Field; their armor-piercing shells for surface engagements were stored at the back of the magazines. When the destroyer *Yudachi* spotted the American force, Abe ordered his ships to reload their guns with armor-piercing rounds, a process that took eight minutes.<sup>74</sup> Soon after, the light cruiser *Helena's* surface-search radar detected the Japanese force. The cruiser sent Callaghan continuous contact reports, but these were only partially intelligible, because the group's voice circuits were congested. As a result, the Japanese managed to fire the first shot. Shell fire and torpedoes from *Hiei* and the destroyer *Akasuki* knocked out the cruiser *Atlanta* and

killed Admiral Scott. As the battle continued, the American force took heavy gun and torpedo fire at close range. The stern of the cruiser *Portland* was almost blown off, *San Francisco* was badly damaged, and Callaghan was killed. *Hiei* soon attracted the attention of the American ships, however; gunfire riddled the battleship's topside, and fires broke out across its deck. Blinded by his flagship's fires and unable to determine the disposition of his forces, Abe ordered his ships to withdraw. The Japanese lost two destroyers during the battle. *Hiei*, lacking a working rudder, sank the next day after sustaining heavy damage from U.S. aircraft from Guadalcanal and *Enterprise*.

Despite the loss of *Hiei*, Yamamoto was determined to land the 38th Division on Guadalcanal. To support the landing, Mikawa sortied a bombardment force containing the heavy cruisers *Suzuya* and *Maya* from the Shortlands anchorage. On the night of 13–14 November, the ships poured 1,370 rounds onto Henderson Field but failed to knock it out.<sup>75</sup> The next morning, American planes struck the force, sinking the cruiser *Kinugasa* and damaging three other cruisers and a destroyer.

Yamamoto planned to bombard Henderson Field one more time before landing the 38th Division. He ordered Admiral Kondo's Strike Force, reinforced by Abe's surviving ships, to shell the airfield. Radio intelligence warned the Americans in sufficient time for Kinkaid to detach Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee's battle-ship force, which included *Washington* and *South Dakota*, to meet the Japanese.

The final phase of the battle of Guadalcanal was the first battleship action of the Pacific War. Expecting opposition, Kondo had deployed a screen of cruisers and destroyers around his bombardment force. The screen spotted the American battle line and began stalking it. *Washington*'s radar detected the Japanese screen and opened fire, forcing the Japanese to withdraw. *Washington* and *South Dakota* then engaged the Japanese task force. *South Dakota*, however, soon experienced a power failure that knocked out its tactical radios and radar and separated it from the rest of the force. Despite sustaining forty-two large-caliber hits, it continued steaming at full speed. *Washington*, in turn, locked onto the battleship *Kirishima* and smothered it with gunfire from its sixteen-inch main battery. *Kirishima* burst into flames and began to sink. The cruisers *Takao* and *Ataka* and the light cruiser *Nagara* also sustained damage that forced them to return to Japan for repairs. Besides the badly damaged *South Dakota*, Lee lost three destroyers in the melee.

The surface battle over, every American air group within range pounced upon Tanaka's convoy. Land-based aircraft from Guadalcanal and Espiritu Santo and *Enterprise*'s air wing sank all but four of the transports. Those ships that survived caught fire and beached. Aircraft from Henderson Field continued to bomb and strafe the remnants of two regiments and one battalion of infantry

and a regiment of engineers—some two thousand men out of ten thousand that had embarked.<sup>76</sup>

In the weeks that followed, the ships of Tanaka's 2nd Destroyer Squadron continued to make runs to Guadalcanal at night, with supplies in rubberized metal containers lashed to their sterns. The crews cut the supplies free off Tassafaronga Point, where they drifted ashore or were brought in by swimming soldiers. The navy also used submarines to resupply Guadalcanal. Despite these efforts, the condition of the Japanese army continued to worsen; disease and malnutrition took their toll. Virtually everyone was on the verge of starvation. The sick rolls grew, and even the healthy were exhausted. The American situation, by contrast, improved in December as fresh Marine and army units relieved the original Marine detachments after four months of duty. By 9 December, twenty-five thousand Japanese faced forty thousand soldiers on the island. The Marines enlarged Henderson Field, and the navy built a torpedo-boat base on Tulagi.<sup>77</sup>

In late November, Halsey received intelligence indicating that Yamamoto was preparing to launch another attempt to reinforce Guadalcanal. Halsey dispatched Rear Admiral Carleton H. Wright with a force of cruisers and destroyers to stop him. Wright was determined not to repeat the mistakes American commanders had committed in past engagements. To ensure that his forces would spot the enemy before they themselves were sighted, he placed a ship equipped with improved surface-search radar in each cruiser group. To avoid confusion in the heat of battle, he reserved the use of communication circuits for orders and established a set of unambiguous commands. He also abandoned the standard single-column attack formation in favor of tactics better suited to night combat. Upon engaging the enemy, Wright's destroyers would launch a massive torpedo attack and then peel off to allow his cruisers to fire on the enemy ships. Instead of using searchlights, which would betray their locations, his ships would rely upon flares dropped from floatplanes to illuminate their quarry.<sup>78</sup>

As it turned out, Wright faced not another force attempting to land more troops on Guadalcanal but Tanaka's flotilla on one of its runs to bring food and ammunition to the existing Japanese garrison. The two met on 30 November, in the battle of Tassafaronga.<sup>79</sup> The SG radar aboard the cruiser *Minneapolis* detected Tanaka's screen at a range of thirteen miles, but Wright waited four minutes before approving a torpedo attack. By the time his destroyers launched their torpedoes, they were firing on the Japanese from astern.

The veteran Tanaka would not allow the American force to ambush him. Indeed, he had trained his crews to wheel and fire torpedoes if surprised. The destroyer *Takanami*, closest to the U.S. force, launched a salvo of torpedoes but immediately drew fire from Wright's force and sustained fatal damage. The remainder of Tanaka's destroyers released their cargo containers and paralleled

the American ships. The Japanese launched nearly fifty torpedoes, some of which tore into the U.S. cruiser line, sinking the cruiser *Northampton* and battering *Minneapolis*, *New Orleans*, and *Pensacola*. To make things worse, Wright's two rear-guard destroyers took friendly fire because they lacked the task force's recognition code.

Tassafaronga was the most successful torpedo attack of the war and a textbook example of night fighting. Tanaka not only delivered supplies to the troops on Guadalcanal but dealt a crushing blow to a superior American force. By avoiding the use of searchlights and employing torpedoes instead of guns, his force made itself difficult for the Americans to locate and engage. Even after the battle, the U.S. Navy was unsure of the size and composition of the Japanese force.<sup>80</sup> The battle also exposed American weaknesses. For one thing, Wright's force had been thrown together under inexperienced leadership. Nor could the U.S. Navy's technological advantage compensate for poor night-fighting skills. Indeed, the use of radar caused U.S. ships to train all their heavy guns on the closest Japanese ship, *Takanami*, leaving the others untouched.

Despite Japanese victories at sea, however, the condition of the fifteen thousand Japanese troops on Guadalcanal continued to worsen. Much of the force was at the point of starvation, and malaria was rampant. Even the healthy were practically ineffective due to exhaustion. On 31 December, the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters decided to evacuate Guadalcanal. U.S. intelligence detected the buildup for the operation but misinterpreted it as preparations for another offensive.<sup>81</sup> The evacuation occurred over three different nights between 2 and 8 February, but the American forces on Guadalcanal were unaware that no Japanese remained on the island until the afternoon of 9 February.<sup>82</sup>

The Guadalcanal campaign marked a turning point in the Pacific War. It improved the strategic position of the United States in the southwest Pacific. By occupying Guadalcanal and its airfield, the United States could control the sea lines of communications to Australia. The campaign also exacted a considerable toll upon the Japanese. By its end, Japan had lost two-thirds of its 31,400 troops on the island. The United States, by contrast, had lost fewer than two thousand of the approximately sixty thousand Marines and soldiers it had deployed. While the Japanese navy was the clear victor in many of these battles, it could not afford to pay the price in ships that the United States could. The campaign also decimated the strength of Japan's elite corps of naval aviators. In trying to hold Guadalcanal, Japan considerably diminished the fighting power of its fleet. By the time it was decided to withdraw from Guadalcanal, Japan's naval strength had been so eroded that it was unable to stop the subsequent American advance north toward the home islands.

## TRANSLATING INFORMATION ADVANTAGE INTO TACTICAL SUCCESS

The Guadalcanal campaign shows that technological superiority does not inevitably yield victory. Instead, the weapon systems, doctrine, and organization of opposing forces interact, in ways that are often complex. The campaign also demonstrates the importance of situational awareness and friction in warfare. Finally, the case shows that technology may be employed under operational conditions previously unforeseen by its developers. Victory lies with the force that is better able to adapt its weapon systems to local conditions.

Throughout the campaign, American forces enjoyed a marked tactical advantage over the Japanese during daylight hours. Because the United States controlled Henderson Field, American aircraft were able to dominate the seas around the island. Moreover, radar gave U.S. commanders an advantage in carrier battles in open waters. During the battle of the Eastern Solomons, U.S. air-search radar detected the approaching Japanese air strike at a distance of eighty-eight miles, giving Fletcher sufficient time to launch fifty-three fighters with full fuel tanks to meet the incoming attack. It also allowed American air controllers to vector fighters to attack the Japanese force without fear of being ambushed by Japanese fighters.<sup>83</sup>

Rather than contesting U.S. superiority during the day, the Japanese navy chose to conduct the majority of its operations at night. Indeed, it saw night combat as an asymmetrical strategy to circumvent the strength of the U.S. Navy. It possessed a coherent tactical system for night fighting as well as weapon systems optimized for such operations, and it had conducted decades of realistic training to hone its skills.

Radar gave U.S. forces the means to detect, track, and target Japanese surface forces before they spotted the Americans. Yet the United States proved unable to exploit its advantage in radar technology during the campaign. First, radar technology had yet to mature.<sup>84</sup> The sets deployed aboard U.S. ships had limited range and resolution. Moreover, interpreting radar returns took considerable skill. Early sets could provide a general view of objects in the vicinity of the observing ship or an accurate range and bearing to any one object but not both simultaneously. As a result, it was easy for a commander to lose sight of a rapidly changing tactical situation.

Second, the navy had not developed techniques to exploit the potential of radar. Instead, it treated radar as an overlay to operational concepts designed for daylight engagements between capital ships. Nor did the navy possess adequate tactics for torpedo defense. In battle after battle, U.S. forces deployed in lines that offered little protection against Japanese torpedo barrages. The navy was

also slow to learn from its mistakes, a trend magnified by the frequency with which it replaced its tactical commanders.

Finally, the geography of the theater limited the effectiveness of radar. The U.S. Navy had developed radar in anticipation of battle on the high seas. Because many of the Guadalcanal campaign's battles took place in confined waters surrounded by mountainous islands, American radar operators often had limited warning of the approach of enemy ships. Islands or heavy rain squalls often obscured returns from surface ships. Indeed, surface-search radar routinely failed to detect destroyers in confined waters beyond five thousand yards.<sup>85</sup>

In each of the campaign's battles, the side that possessed a superior awareness of the tactical situation prevailed. It was, in other words, the ability to collect, interpret, and act upon information rather than technology that marked the difference between victory and defeat. Japanese naval commanders were usually able to discern the location and disposition of U.S. forces faster and more accurately than their adversaries. They also acted upon that information more rapidly and effectively than their American counterparts. Because the Japanese navy had developed and regularly practiced concepts for night combat, its commanders and their crews possessed a common frame of reference. This tactical system usually gave the Japanese a considerable advantage in situational awareness over the Americans, while long-range weaponry like the Long Lance torpedo gave them the ability to translate their information advantage into tactical success. During the battle of Savo Island, for example, Mikawa Gunichi managed to identify and engage Kelly Turner's warships before they spotted his force. Moreover, because Turner had divided his forces, Mikawa was able to defeat them piecemeal. The commanders of the American and Australian ships, by contrast, had little understanding of the battle as it unfolded.

In the few instances where U.S. forces obtained superior situational awareness, they were victorious. At Cape Esperance, Norman Scott's ships mauled Goto's reinforcement force, largely because the American commander was able to achieve surprise and prevent the Japanese from employing their preferred concept of battle. Still, though the U.S. force had a tremendous information advantage over the Japanese, Scott used his radar and radio poorly. As a result, he failed to achieve what should have been a complete victory. Never again in the campaign would the Americans catch the Japanese so unprepared.

Just as the campaign illustrates the value of situational awareness, it also demonstrates the enduring importance of "friction." In his masterwork of strategic theory, *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz developed the concept of friction to encompass the multitude of "factors that distinguish real war from war on paper."<sup>86</sup> These include the effects of danger, combat's demands for physical exertion,

imperfect or uncertain information, chance, surprise, the physical and political limits of force, and unpredictability stemming from interaction with the enemy. By and large, there is an inverse relationship between friction and situational awareness: the higher the level of general friction one side experiences, the lower its situational awareness.<sup>87</sup>

Friction influenced the outcome of nearly every battle in this campaign. The terrain and weather of the theater of operations affected the course of many of the clashes. Both sides were plagued by imperfect and inaccurate intelligence throughout the campaign, increasing the potential for surprise. Moreover, both experienced communication problems that multiplied the opportunity for misunderstanding. American forces in particular often overloaded tactical voice circuits, degrading communication between ships. Because the Japanese generally did a better job of mitigating the effects of friction, they nearly always prevailed in battle.

In the months that followed the campaign, the U.S. Navy began to learn from its defeats. Studying the battles off Guadalcanal closely, Commander Arleigh Burke blamed American losses on insufficient drill in night combat. In the spring of 1943, Rear Admiral A. Stanton Merrill began to train his destroyers in that discipline. At first, they trained during the day, simulating night operations. As his force became more skilled, he shifted to training at night, under harsh conditions.<sup>88</sup>

The navy also developed more effective operational concepts and organizational arrangements for night combat. It began detaching destroyers from cruisers to allow them to employ to full effect the offensive power of their torpedoes and guns. At the same time, Burke developed new tactics for destroyer combat. He split his destroyer squadron into two mutually supporting divisions. Instead of deploying in long lines, as they had during the Guadalcanal campaign, they began to operate in compact divisions of three to four ships each. Upon making contact with the enemy, one division would close, fire its torpedoes, and turn away. When the first salvo of torpedoes hit and the Japanese began returning fire, the second division would attack from another direction. Burke believed that the tactic would be well suited to the Solomons, because the islands themselves would prevent the Japanese from detecting his destroyers before they opened fire.<sup>89</sup> It was a brilliant innovation, one that capitalized upon the geography of the theater—as the Japanese had been doing all along.

Finally, the navy developed methods to use radar more effectively. Over time, the radar plot—the room that contained the scope displaying contacts from the ship's radar—became the location where information from radio and lookouts was correlated. The combat information center (CIC), as it was to be known, thus became the hub of tactical decision making aboard ship.



The combination of improved tactics and organization came together when American and Japanese destroyers met in the battle of Vella Gulf on 6–7 August 1943. During the battle, the six destroyers that constituted Frederick Moosbrugger's Task Group 31.2 used Burke's tactics to deadly effect. Moosbrugger's surface-search radar detected the Japanese before they became aware of the presence of U.S. combatants. Indeed, U.S. destroyers launched torpedoes three minutes before the Japanese force sighted the Americans. Moosbrugger's force sank three Japanese destroyers and escaped unscathed.<sup>90</sup>

American forces also enjoyed considerable success at the battle of Empress Augusta Bay.<sup>91</sup> The setting for the battle was in many ways reminiscent of that before Savo Island: Merrill's cruisers and destroyers had been assigned to protect the Marine landing at Cape Torokina on Bougainville, much as Kelly Turner's force had been responsible for protecting that on Guadalcanal. This time, however, U.S. scout aircraft provided extremely accurate reports on the approach of Vice Admiral Omori Sentaro's cruiser and destroyer force. The Japanese, by contrast, operating in poor visibility and with no radar, had no idea of the size and composition of the force they faced. Merrill used his situational-awareness advantage to fire a salvo of torpedoes before the Japanese force knew it was under attack. As a result, Merrill sank one light cruiser and damaged another, while sinking one destroyer and damaging two others.

The U.S. Navy repeated its success at the battle of Cape Saint George, which was to be the last surface battle in the Solomons.<sup>92</sup> During the battle, Burke's two destroyer divisions won a decisive victory over five destroyers attempting to reinforce the Japanese garrison on Buka. Burke's force spotted the Japanese force first and launched its first torpedo salvo before the Japanese knew they were under attack. Employing the same tactics that had yielded victory at Vella Gulf, Burke's force sank three destroyers while sustaining no casualties.

The naval battles off Guadalcanal illustrate vividly that technological superiority does not guarantee victory. At the outbreak of World War II, the Japanese navy lacked surface-search and fire-control radar. It had, however, developed and practiced a coherent tactical system for night combat. The United States, by contrast, possessed radar but had yet to develop concepts and organizations to exploit its potential fully. As a result, the Japanese won victory after victory against the Americans. It was not until after the campaign that the U.S. Navy learned how to combine radar with new concepts and organizations; when it finally did, the result was deadly for the Japanese.

The U.S. Navy preferred engagements between opposing battle lines in the open sea. There, radar would allow the American fleet to spot its opponent at long range and smother him with precise—and lethal—gunfire. During the Guadalcanal campaign, however, the navy found itself operating in conditions



markedly different from those envisioned by prewar strategists. Radar was of little use in battles waged in confined waters bounded by mountainous islands. It was not until Arleigh Burke and Stanton Merrill developed concepts and organizations that suited local conditions that the navy began to take advantage of the possibilities of radar.

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#### NOTES

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  47. The U.S. Navy's 1934 *General Tactical Instructions*, for example, described evasion as the primary form of night torpedo warfare. If evasion proved unsuccessful, the American commander would employ destroyers, cruisers, and—if necessary—battleships to destroy enemy destroyers before they closed to firing range. FTP 142, pp. 143–44.
  48. See Minoru Genda, "Evolution of Aircraft Carrier Tactics of the Imperial Japanese Navy," in *Air Raid: Pearl Harbor! Recollections of a Day of Infamy*, ed. Paul Stillwell (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1981), pp. 23–27.
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  50. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies*, p. 296.
  51. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 296–97.
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  61. Spector, *Eagle against the Sun*, p. 193.
  62. Dull, *Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, p. 196.
  63. *Ibid.*, pp. 197–208.
  64. Tanaka, "Japan's Losing Struggle for Guadalcanal," part 1, pp. 693–94.
  65. John Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 375.
  66. Dull, *Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, pp. 215–21.
  67. Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 379; Vice Adm. Raizo Tanaka, with Roger Pineau, "Japan's Losing Struggle for Guadalcanal," part 2, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 82, no. 8 (August 1956), pp. 815–16.
  68. *Hiyo* suffered a fire in its engine room shortly thereafter and had to withdraw.
  69. Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 382.
  70. Dull, *Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, pp. 227–35.
  71. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
  72. Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 391.
  73. Dull, *Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, pp. 237–49; Tanaka, "Japan's Losing Struggle for Guadalcanal," part 2, pp. 820–22.
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76. Ibid., p. 247.
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81. Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded*, p. 395.
82. Dull, *Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, p. 259.
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# FRIENDLY FIRE AND THE LIMITS OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM

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On 22 April 2004, Corporal Patrick Tillman was killed in action in Afghanistan as a result of friendly fire. The controversial death of the Army Ranger, who had given up a lucrative career in professional football to join the Army, generated widespread media interest, military and congressional investigations, books, and most recently a documentary.

Earlier in the day, Corporal Tillman's Ranger platoon had split into two groups, with Tillman and his platoon leader in the first group. Due to dangerous terrain, the second group, led by the platoon sergeant, abandoned its planned route and instead followed the first group's route in vehicles down a canyon road late in the day toward the village of Manah, where Tillman and the remainder of the platoon waited. The second group came under attack and immediately began suppressive fire. Tillman, accompanied by an Afghan Military Forces (AMF) soldier carrying an AK-47 and the remainder of the platoon, took up supporting

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positions in the village and along an elevated area overlooking the road. As it moved forward under fire, the first vehicle in the second group saw muzzle flashes coming from the elevated area and directed fire against it, killing Corporal Tillman and the Afghan soldier with him. Continuing to fire as they moved forward, the Rangers in the first vehicle also wounded their own platoon leader and his radio operator.<sup>1</sup> Reportedly, before he was shot Tillman had thrown a smoke grenade, and he and other Rangers

had shouted and waved in an unsuccessful attempt to stop the second group's attack; instead the movement only attracted additional fire.<sup>2</sup>

The Army handled the aftermath of the friendly-fire incident poorly. Initial investigations of the shootings were inadequate, Tillman's uniform and equipment were not preserved, initial reports of Tillman's death and his recommendation for the Silver Star contained factual inaccuracies, and the Tillman family was not informed about the true circumstances surrounding Corporal Tillman's death for thirty-five days.<sup>3</sup>

However, more germane to this article, in March 2006 the Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID) began an extensive criminal investigation into the friendly-fire shootings, concluding that those Rangers in the second group "did not commit the offenses of Negligent Homicide or Aggravated Assault."<sup>4</sup> The CID report found that the Rangers had been under enemy fire and had reasonably believed that they were defending themselves and firing at the enemy.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, as contributing factors to the accidental shooting the CID noted poor visibility, communications problems between the two groups, and the presence of the AMF soldier.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, "seven Rangers were either reprimanded or received nonjudicial punishment as a result of the incident," including some soldiers receiving nonjudicial punishment for "dereliction of duty," but none of the soldiers who were involved in the Tillman shooting were deemed criminally culpable.<sup>7</sup>

In the wake of a friendly-fire incident, particularly when it draws the attention of the media, there is a call for accountability. Someone needs to be held responsible. Someone needs to go to jail. Indeed, in some cases the facts seem so egregious that the need to subject to courts-martial the individual or individuals responsible is compelling.

However, the military has rarely used its justice system as a response to friendly-fire incidents, and when it has, prosecutions have rarely been successful. Further, the use of the military justice system raises significant collateral issues, among them concerns about second-guessing the actions of members of the armed forces in combat, encouraging hesitancy and timidity, overreacting to complex systemic problems by punishing individual manifestations of those problems, and fairness in determining who should be held accountable. As one commentator who has studied the history of friendly fire notes, "In the confusion of battle, accidents occur. They are tragic, but who can take responsibility for chaos?"<sup>8</sup>

This article will define friendly fire and distinguish it from other forms of battlefield killings. It will review the history of friendly fire, its causes, and its pervasiveness. Further, although there exist few reported cases, the article will discuss the often ill-fated attempts to address the problem through the American military justice system. Finally, although conceding the many difficulties

involved with achieving a successful court-martial prosecution, the article posits that there remains an important, albeit difficult, role for the military justice system in response to such incidents.

### FRIENDLY FIRE DEFINED

Friendly fire involves the accidental killing in a combat setting of one soldier by another of the same or an allied force. The Department of Defense defines the term as “a circumstance in which members of a U.S. or friendly military force are mistakenly or accidentally killed or injured in action by U.S. or friendly forces actively engaged with an enemy or who are directing fire at a hostile force or what is thought to be a hostile force.”<sup>9</sup> Friendly fire differs considerably from the deliberate killing of another, sometimes called “fragging,” which is simply premeditated murder and readily addressable under article 118 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, when capable of proof. As one Marine Corps lawyer and scholar has noted, fragging is “Friendly Fire with Malice.”<sup>10</sup>

The first documented case of an American fragging dates to a deliberate killing in 1781 of an officer by Continental Army soldiers.<sup>11</sup> During the Vietnam conflict the number of fragging incidents became a noticeable problem as the discipline of American forces declined. The Marine Corps estimated between a hundred and 150 such incidents during the course of the war, and unofficial Army estimates were as high as 527 between 1969 and 1971.<sup>12</sup> One academic found most Vietnam-era fraggings to be attempts to intimidate officers and noncommissioned officers, particularly those who refused to countenance efforts to avoid combat.<sup>13</sup>

The concept of friendly fire is similar in many respects to the accidental killing of civilians, but such accidental killings appear to be treated differently and are often referred to as “civilian casualties” or by more sterile terms like “collateral damage.” Reported cases of courts-martial involving the accidental deaths of civilians are rare. The most famous court-martial involving an accidental attack on civilians occurred during World War II, and its fame was generated less by the nature of the alleged misconduct than by the identity of the president of the court—a movie star, Colonel Jimmy Stewart.

In that case, in March 1945 seven B-24 Liberators on a bombing run to Aschaffenburg, Germany, became lost, allegedly due to bad weather and improperly working navigational equipment, and unintentionally bombed Zurich, Switzerland.<sup>14</sup> Zurich was deep in Swiss territory, near a large body of water, and the bombings generated a strong reaction from the Swiss government. Ultimately the lead plane’s pilot and navigator were tried but acquitted of the charge that they had “wrongfully and negligently” bombed friendly territory.<sup>15</sup>



## NORMAL RATHER THAN EXCEPTIONAL

Friendly fire, also called “amicide,” “fratricide,” or “blue on blue,” has been a constant problem in warfare since the beginning of recorded time. In his comprehensive study of the subject, Geoffrey Regan traces such incidents from the Greek hoplites to modern times. Regan opines that these types of accidental killings were so common from antiquity through at least medieval times that “they were scarcely worthy of comment unless they related to a leader of note struck down by mischance.”<sup>16</sup>

Friendly fire has occurred in battles in which only one force was on the battlefield. For example, during a night march in 1788 the rear of an Austrian column near Karansebes, Transylvania, thought the shots and shouts from drunken soldiers at the head of the column indicated a Turkish attack; the soldiers panicked and started firing, causing an all-Austrian battle that resulted in thousands of casualties.<sup>17</sup> The American military has suffered from equally embarrassing incidents. During the 1943 American and Canadian invasion of the Aleutian island of Kiska, twenty-eight Americans were killed and another fifty wounded on the first day despite the previous departure of all Japanese forces.<sup>18</sup>

Not only are historical examples of friendly fire so prevalent as to be characterized as normal rather than exceptional, but the causes of these incidents are so numerous as to preclude easy explanation. In some cases, friendly fire was the result of inexperience and inadequate training. For example, in 1643, during the English Civil War, poorly trained and inexperienced parliamentary infantry organized in three lines attacked a heavily fortified building held by royalist troops. Instead of the forward line firing first and then retiring to the rear to reload while the next line in turn fired, all three fired simultaneously, effectively eliminating the front rank.<sup>19</sup>

A plethora of other causes have been suggested as well: stress, inadequate coordination, faulty information, reduced visibility, inadequate training, chaotic conditions, inexperience, psychological warfare, low morale, panic and carelessness, misidentification, and the necessity for split-second decisions.<sup>20</sup> The one constant in these incidents has been human error. At some point in the chain of events leading to friendly-fire death, someone misidentified friend for foe, failed to provide critical information in an accurate or timely way, failed to determine accurately a location, misinterpreted an order, or the like.

Further, the number of casualties associated with friendly fire has often been stunning. One French general estimated that approximately seventy-five thousand French casualties in World War I were caused by French artillery fire.<sup>21</sup> An estimated 5 percent of Vietnam casualties were attributed to friendly fire.<sup>22</sup> During the first Persian Gulf War, Operation DESERT STORM, 23–24 percent of U.S. fatalities and 77 percent of American vehicle losses were attributed to friendly



fire.<sup>23</sup> One military scholar opines that 10–15 percent of U.S. casualties during the twentieth century were caused by friendly fire, which equates to between 177,000 and 250,000 casualties.<sup>24</sup>

As discussed in this article, the lion's share of U.S. friendly-fire incidents appear to involve the Air Force (and its predecessor Army Air Corps) and Army and Marine Corps ground forces. However, the Navy has not been immune to this problem, being both the victim and perpetrator of such incidents. A 1995 *Naval War College Review* article reports fifty-three World War II incidents in which "U.S. vessels were damaged or sunk by Allied weapons," resulting in over six hundred casualties, in addition to the "many instances of naval aircraft losses due to friendly fire."<sup>25</sup> The article further identifies U.S. naval vessels that were the victims of friendly fire during the Korean War, Vietnam, and DESERT STORM.<sup>26</sup>

Nor has friendly fire discriminated in terms of rank. In the wake of the Normandy landings in World War II, Allied bombers accidentally attacked the U.S. 30th Infantry Division, causing 814 casualties, including Lieutenant General Lesley McNair, who was killed.<sup>27</sup>

Interesting from the legal standpoint (in terms of self-defense and justification defenses) are the unusual, but not completely unheard-of, instances of friendly-fire recipients defending themselves though knowing their attackers to be friendly forces. During the invasion of Kiska, where there was no enemy resistance, "one American soldier, convinced he was attacking a Japanese unit, had to be deliberately shot down by his comrades as he insisted on charging and flinging grenades as he ran, even though they shouted at him to stop in English."<sup>28</sup> Further, during the Sicily campaign, American ground forces were frequently attacked by American air forces. Indeed, General Omar Bradley was strafed (unsuccessfully) three times in a single day.<sup>29</sup> During one such incident, a U.S. tank column shot down the American plane and captured its pilot.<sup>30</sup>

During World War II, American patrol torpedo (PT) boats and aircraft in the South Pacific frequently inflicted casualties on each other. In one incident in July 1943, four Army B-25s attacked two Navy PT boats, sinking one. In turn, the remaining PT boat shot down one of the Army aircraft, killing three of the crew.<sup>31</sup>

In one particularly bizarre incident during World War II, an American tank-destroyer platoon opened fire on a tank column; it ceased firing when it realized the tanks were Americans, but the tanks continued to return fire even after they had come close enough to identify the tank-destroyer unit positively as American. The tanks passed through the first American unit and proceeded to attack an adjoining American unit. As soon as they took up position on a nearby hill, the tanks in turn were attacked by American aircraft.<sup>32</sup>

## FRIENDLY FIRE THROUGH THE PRISM OF MILITARY LAW

When examining the efficacy of the military justice system in the friendly-fire context, one should start by looking through the prism of the applicable criminal standard. Since 1951 members of the armed forces have been subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Prior to the UCMJ, the Army followed the Articles of War, and the Navy was subject to the Articles for the Government of the Navy, which made similar punitive articles available to prosecute friendly-fire deaths. The following are common friendly-fire-related offenses.

The UCMJ contains a hierarchy of homicide offenses, ranging from premeditated murder (article 118) to negligent homicide (article 134). Premeditated murder imposes the heaviest burden on the government but also authorizes the greatest level of punishment—death. To achieve a conviction for premeditated murder, the trial counsel (prosecutor) must prove that the accused (defendant) acted with a “premeditated design to kill”—that is, a specific intent to kill, with consideration of the act intended.<sup>33</sup> By comparison, a conviction for negligent homicide requires only proof that the accused’s action or failure to act constituted simple negligence (lack of due care); no specific intent to kill need be proven.<sup>34</sup> The maximum punishment for a negligent homicide conviction comprises a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and three years’ confinement. However, regardless of the offense charged, the UCMJ requires that all offenses be proven beyond reasonable doubt, the highest level of proof known to the law.<sup>35</sup>

Two offenses likely to be charged under the UCMJ in a friendly-fire incident are involuntary manslaughter, under article 119, and the lesser included offense of negligent homicide. Involuntary manslaughter is on the low end of the hierarchy of homicide offenses and requires proof of culpable negligence, which is defined in part as “a negligent act or omission accompanied by a culpable disregard for the foreseeable consequences to others of that act or omission.”<sup>36</sup> It is further defined as “a negligent act or failure to act accompanied by a gross, reckless, wanton, or deliberate disregard for the foreseeable results to others.”<sup>37</sup> The basis of such a charge “may be a negligent act or omission that, when viewed in the light of human experience, might foreseeably result in the death of another, even though the death would not necessarily be a natural and probable consequence of the act or omission.”<sup>38</sup> As examples of culpable negligence, the *Manual for Courts-Martial* offers “negligently conducting target practice so that the bullets go in the direction of an inhabited house within range; pointing a pistol in jest at another and pulling the trigger, believing, but without taking reasonable precautions to ascertain, that it would not be dangerous; and carelessly leaving poisons or dangerous drugs where they may endanger life.”<sup>39</sup>

Negligent homicide is similar to involuntary manslaughter but requires a lower degree of carelessness or negligence. The accused's action or failure to act that resulted in the death need rise only to the level of "simple" negligence: "the absence of due care, that is, an act or omission of a person who is under a duty to use due care which exhibits a lack of that degree of care of the safety of others which a reasonably careful person would have exercised under the same or similar circumstances."<sup>40</sup>

Another likely charge is dereliction of duty, which is punishable under UCMJ article 92(3). This punitive article requires proof that the accused had certain duties that he or she knew of, or reasonably should have known of, and that the accused was either willfully (i.e., intentionally) or through neglect or culpable inefficiency derelict in performing those duties.<sup>41</sup> Individuals perform duties "negligently" when, it being their duty to use due care, they act in a way "which exhibits a lack of degree of that degree of care which a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under the same or similar circumstances." Culpable inefficiency is defined as "inefficiency for which there is no reasonable or just excuse."<sup>42</sup> Mere ineptitude as a reason for failure to perform a duty serves as a defense against this charge.<sup>43</sup>

The "duty may be imposed by treaty, statute, regulation, lawful order, standard operating procedure, or custom of the service."<sup>44</sup> The punitive article is broad enough to encompass a duty imposed by rules of engagement. Although the courts have determined that they will not require a higher standard to establish the "criminality of tactical-nonperformance decisions by military line officers," they will "not substitute hindsight for foresight" when determining whether the accused acted negligently.<sup>45</sup> In comparison to other offenses under the UCMJ, the burden on the prosecution is not particularly onerous, a fact reflected in the maximum sentence. Dereliction of duty through neglect or culpable inefficiency subjects the accused to a maximum sentence of only three months' confinement and forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for three months.<sup>46</sup>

Convictions under article 92(3) have encompassed a wide range of misconduct. To illustrate, service members have been convicted of dereliction of duty for failing to post road guides in pairs and maintain a roster of posted guides, resulting in the death of a guide by exposure during a desert exercise; willfully permitting a subordinate to sign falsely an official report; failing to use other available radar ranges while navigating a ship through a narrow passage at night after receiving conflicting information concerning the ship's position; and failing to maintain "an alert and responsible watch."<sup>47</sup>

## APPLICATION OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM TO FRIENDLY-FIRE INCIDENTS

Throughout American military history, reported instances of use of the military justice system in response to friendly-fire incidents have been exceedingly rare. However, several historical cases do exist and warrant review.

### *The American Civil War and the Death of Stonewall Jackson*

One of the best known friendly-fire incidents in American military history involved the shooting of Confederate general Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson. On 2 May 1863, during the battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia, Jackson was mortally wounded by his own men. While Jackson was conducting a mounted nighttime reconnaissance of his forward lines, soldiers of the 7th North Carolina Regiment fired on him and his staff, believing them to be Union soldiers.<sup>48</sup> Jackson and his party rode on through the pitch-black forest toward the 18th North Carolina Regiment, whose soldiers also started shooting at them, also believing them to be attacking Union soldiers. One of Jackson’s aides yelled, “Cease firing! You are firing into your own men!”<sup>49</sup> Major John D. Barry of the 18th North Carolina responded, “It’s a lie! Pour it to them, boys!” The regiment fired into the group, hitting Jackson in the left shoulder, the left forearm, and right palm.<sup>50</sup> In addition to Jackson, four members of his staff were killed and three wounded.<sup>51</sup> Jackson initially survived his wounds, but his left arm was amputated the following day, and he died of wound-related pneumonia on 10 May.<sup>52</sup>

Although the Confederacy had a functioning military justice system, there is no record of any courts-martial involving the Jackson shooting.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Major Barry was promoted to colonel after the battle. A veteran of several battles, Barry commanded the 18th North Carolina at the battle of Gettysburg and eventually rose to the rank of brigadier general.<sup>54</sup>

### *World War II: The Sicily Invasion*

Another significant friendly-fire incident in which no courts-martial resulted, although such action was seriously considered, occurred during the World War II invasion of Sicily. On the third day of the invasion, in July 1943, three battalions and an engineer company of the 82nd Airborne Division, some 1,092 men, were ordered to make a night parachute jump into Sicily.<sup>55</sup> Despite extensive coordination with Army and Navy units in the area, the paratroopers flew into a wall of anti-aircraft fire near the American beachhead. The airborne force suffered severe damage to or total loss of sixty of 145 aircraft; approximately sixty airmen were casualties, and 229 paratroopers were killed, wounded, or missing.<sup>56</sup> General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commanding the European Theater of Operations, was livid, ordering Seventh Army commander George Patton, who feared being relieved himself, to conduct an immediate investigation into what

Eisenhower assumed to have been “inexcusable carelessness and negligence on the part of someone,” to fix responsibility, and to take disciplinary action.<sup>57</sup>

Eventually three reports were submitted to Eisenhower. The senior airborne adviser, Brigadier Frederick “Boy” Browning of the British army, blamed inadequately trained aviators. An American general, Joe Swing, blamed the disaster on a combination of five errors: inadequate coordination of air routes with nonairborne forces; inability of the insufficiently trained airmen to follow the complex air routes; the Navy’s rigid policy of firing on all aircraft; scheduling the airborne operation in the aftermath of sustained Axis aerial attacks on the fleet, including twenty-three separate attacks the day of the jump; and failure to warn Army antiaircraft units adequately of the pending operation.<sup>58</sup> In his report to Eisenhower, the 82nd’s commanding general, Matthew Ridgway, forestalled future disciplinary action by Eisenhower by concluding that “the responsibility for loss of life and material resulting from this operation is so divided, so difficult to fix with impartial justice, and so questionable of ultimate value to the service because of the acrimonious debates which would follow efforts to hold responsible persons or services to account, that disciplinary action is of doubtful wisdom.”<sup>59</sup>

#### *The Korean War: A Rare Court-Martial Conviction*

The Korean War saw one of the few successful friendly-fire prosecutions. In *United States v. Perruccio*, an Army private was convicted of negligent homicide after shooting another American soldier whom the accused alleged he had mistaken for an enemy infiltrator.<sup>60</sup> The two soldiers had been in a five-man half-track crew approximately one mile from the enemy lines, with friendly infantry between them and the enemy.<sup>61</sup> At night, one soldier, relieved every two hours, would stand guard while the remaining four slept in a nearby bunker. The guard habitually entered the bunker to check the fire in the stove, the bunker’s only source of light. Although the bunker had received no small-arms fire, the unit was under a two-week-long alert against infiltrators and guerrilla attacks.<sup>62</sup>

Approximately fifty minutes after taking over, the guard entered the bunker to check the stove. Private Perruccio, whom he had just relieved, grabbed his carbine and fired several rounds at the guard, killing him. Neither man said a word.<sup>63</sup> Perruccio later argued that the killing was justified because he had reasonably believed the victim to be an enemy infiltrator, but his defense failed; he was deemed negligent in not attempting to determine the identity of the victim before firing.<sup>64</sup> He was sentenced to receive a bad-conduct discharge, forfeit all pay and allowances, and be confined for a year, but ultimately his sentence was remitted.<sup>65</sup>

By way of comparison, a second court-martial conviction in that war for involuntary manslaughter was reversed on appeal. In *United States v. Tigert*, Corporal

Tigert had gone to sleep in a sleeping bag on a cot when the victim—"drunk, staggering and boisterous"—sat on him, pushed him partially off the cot, twisted his arm, and demanded whiskey.<sup>66</sup> Because his unit was in close proximity to the front lines, Tigert, who was characterized as an "excellent" soldier, had a loaded pistol within reach and now reacted instinctively, "without any particular thought running through his mind unless it was 'maybe infiltrators or something.'"<sup>67</sup> He woke quickly out of a sound sleep, swinging his pistol, which discharged, killing the drunken soldier.<sup>68</sup>

Placing particular emphasis on the combat setting, the Army Board of Review posited that the evidence was insufficient to sustain an involuntary manslaughter conviction or even the lesser included offense of negligent homicide.<sup>69</sup> The board found it "highly probable that any person being so aroused in similar surroundings would first think of 'infiltrators' and act on the spur of the moment as did the accused."<sup>70</sup> Significantly for purposes of this article, the board further emphasized the context in which the accused was to be judged: "It must be conceded that soldiers injected into such a situation where hardship and danger to life and limb are ever present can be expected to act in furtherance of self-preservation somewhat differently than their comrades engaged in garrison duty. We have no reason to believe that this accused is any different than other soldiers in their reaction to the stress of armed combat."<sup>71</sup>

### *Vietnam: An Unsuccessful Court-Martial*

During the Vietnam War, friendly-fire incidents were investigated, but (at least within the Army) findings of actionable negligence were punished under article 15 of the UCMJ (i.e., as nonjudicial punishment).<sup>72</sup> However, at least one friendly-fire incident generated a court-martial, ultimately resulting in an acquittal. On 17 August 1970 a Marine mortar squad supporting its parent company fired at a tree line that had previously produced sniper fire.<sup>73</sup> The rounds at first struck the tree line but then began to land at the base of a hill occupied by the parent company and then to "walk" back into its position, killing three Marines and a Vietnamese prisoner and wounding an additional thirty Marines.<sup>74</sup> An initial investigation indicated that the later rounds had been fired at a high angle, virtually straight up into the air.<sup>75</sup> Further, the investigation opined that the Marine mortar squad "had fired more rounds than necessary in order to avoid having to carry them back to [the landing zone] and had simply been careless in the control of its fire."<sup>76</sup>

The Marine Corps charged the squad leader and his assistant with negligent homicide, and it also charged the squad leader "with negligence in instructing and supervising his mortar squad."<sup>77</sup> A third Marine gunner was also charged, but the charges were dropped after he accepted immunity in exchange for his testimony.<sup>78</sup>

The Marine Corps defense attorneys investigated and prepared for the trial extensively. They gathered witnesses to put on a “good soldier” defense and also collected sufficient evidence for an alternative explanation—that the casualties had actually been inflicted by enemy mortars using recovered American rounds and taking advantage of the Marine squad’s fire to mask their attack.<sup>79</sup> After a ten-day trial, the panel of officers deliberated for five minutes and acquitted the assistant squad leader; a second five-day trial of the squad leader also resulted in acquittal.<sup>80</sup>

### *Operation DESERT STORM*

As noted earlier, approximately a quarter of all U.S. fatalities during Operation DESERT STORM were caused by friendly fire. One of the most publicized friendly-fire incidents involved the 27 February 1991 death of Corporal Douglas Fielder, assigned to the 54th Engineer Battalion, 1st Armor Division (1st AD), which was part of the U.S. Army VII Corps.

On the afternoon of 26 February, the M548 ammunition carrier crewed by Corporal Fielder and a second soldier became disabled. The engineer company commander ordered his executive officer and the crew of two other vehicles to remain with the M548 until it could be recovered the following day. The three vehicles were marked with an inverted V, an antifratricide recognition symbol. A second antifratricide nighttime device, a blackout light mounted on a pole on the M548, was inoperable.<sup>81</sup>

At approximately 2:30 AM, a troop from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3rd ACR), having passed through its objective, an Iraqi airfield, crossed a nearby VII Corps/XVIII Airborne Corps boundary line into an area controlled by the 1st AD. The 3rd ACR served as a screening force to protect the XVIII Airborne Corps’s right flank. By now, however, coordination along the corps boundary had “disintegrated.”<sup>82</sup> Further, approximately two hours before the incident, the 3rd ACR’s rules of engagement were changed, the new rules including an order not to cross the boundary line and not to “fire unless fired upon.”<sup>83</sup>

As elements of the 3rd ACR moved forward, one of its troop commanders in an Abrams tank detected two of the engineers in his thermal sights and mistakenly believed them to be enemy soldiers; he further mistakenly identified the engineer vehicles as buildings. The troop commander received permission to fire warning shots, which, he and his gunner believed, produced return fire. He engaged the target area until his squadron commander radioed a cease-fire. One of the engineers was wounded in the leg.<sup>84</sup> The engineers had not seen any warning shots and later denied returning fire.<sup>85</sup>

Within minutes of the incident, the squadron commander arrived with five vehicles and dismounted two soldiers from a Bradley Fighting Vehicle to approach



the suspected enemy soldiers but failed to obtain the troop commander's situational assessment. The squadron commander and his gunner observed at least one of the engineer vehicles on fire and figures running from them. Concerned that the fleeing figures were escaping enemy, the squadron commander granted his gunner's request to fire into the ground immediately in front of them. By this time, other 3rd ACR soldiers had identified the engineer vehicles as American. At this point the engineer executive officer fired a green star cluster, which was a daytime antifratricide signal. (A white star cluster was the nighttime antifratricide recognition signal.) The squadron commander's gunner then fired, killing Corporal Fielder. The engineer executive officer approached the 3rd ACR vehicles with a flashlight and his hands raised. Once he was identified as an American, a cease-fire order was relayed to the remaining 3rd ACR vehicles.<sup>86</sup>

The fratricide was immediately reported to the 3rd ACR commander and then to the division and corps levels. Subsequent investigations by a judge advocate captain from the 3rd ACR and later by an XVIII Airborne Corps investigating officer determined that the soldiers involved in the shooting had "acted responsibly."<sup>87</sup> However, a third review, by Forces Command (FORSCOM), disagreed; the "FORSCOM staff judge advocate concluded that four of the officers involved in the fratricide were negligent and derelict in performing their duties."<sup>88</sup> The FORSCOM staff judge advocate recommended that the 3rd ACR, squadron, and troop commanders receive letters of reprimand and that the engineer executive officer receive a letter of admonishment for not having taken sufficient defensive measures beforehand or doing more to protect his men during the incident.<sup>89</sup> Finally, unsatisfied with the Army's efforts, Fielder's parents, who had initially been informed that the Iraqis had killed their son, contacted Senators Jim Sasser (D-Tenn.) and Fred Thompson (R-Tenn.), who in turn initiated a more comprehensive review by the General Accounting Office.<sup>90</sup>

No courts-martial resulted from the friendly-fire incident. Ultimately, the FORSCOM commander ordered that the troop commanders' reprimand be withdrawn, that the engineer officer's letter of admonition remain in place, and that the squadron and 3rd ACR commander's letters of reprimand not be placed in their official personnel records. However, the troop commander received an adverse Officer Evaluation Report.<sup>91</sup> Also, the Army revoked seven awards for valor given to soldiers assigned to or attached to the 3rd ACR for actions related to the incident, because the award documentation indicated that the soldiers had received hostile fire from the enemy.<sup>92</sup>

### *Operation PROVIDE COMFORT*

One of the most puzzling and seemingly avoidable friendly-fire incidents occurred during the American enforcement of a "no-fly zone" in northern Iraq as



part of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. On 14 April 1994, two Air Force F-15s, piloted by experienced and well trained pilots, shot down two Army Black Hawk UH-60 helicopters, carrying sixteen United Nations coalition personnel, in the no-fly zone. The helicopters, which were using operational Identification, Friend or Foe (IFF) systems, had been flying in broad daylight, in excellent visibility, in an area devoid of significant Iraqi action for over a year; an Air Force Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) controller who had contact with all four aircraft failed to intervene.<sup>93</sup> Twenty-six people died as a result.

The Air Force pilots entered the no-fly zone expecting to be the only friendly aircraft in the area, not having been informed of the presence of the Army helicopters either by the AWACS or in their preflight briefing.<sup>94</sup> Detecting the helicopters and failing to obtain a friendly IFF signal, the first pilot made a visual-identification pass and mistook the Army Black Hawks as Iraqi Hind gunships. His wingman, asked to confirm the Hinds, also made a pass and reported “Tally two,” meaning that he only could confirm the existence of two helicopters. But the lead pilot interpreted the report as a confirmation of his identification of the aircraft as Iraqi Hinds.<sup>95</sup> Although the helicopters posed no serious threat to the F-15s and could not have escaped the much faster jets, the pilots did not make further visual-identification passes.<sup>96</sup>

The Black Hawks bore dark forest-green camouflage patterns and had six American flags painted on various parts of their airframes, while the Soviet-made Iraqi Hind used a light tan and brown camouflage.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, accurate visual identification of the American helicopters was difficult. The lead pilot conducted his visual confirmation “at a speed of about 450 knots (522 mph), on a glide path approximately 500 feet above and 1,000 feet to the left of the helicopters.”<sup>98</sup> When the wingman passed by the helicopters “at fifteen hundred to two thousand feet to their right, he saw two helicopters and pulled up quickly calling, ‘Tally two.’”<sup>99</sup>

The two Black Hawks contacted the AWACS at least three times before the shoot-down but had no knowledge of, or radio contact with, the F-15s.<sup>100</sup> Further, unlike the F-15s, the Army helicopters did not have HAVE QUICK II frequency-hopping radios and communicated with the AWACS on a different radio frequency than the fighters used.<sup>101</sup> In any case, although both the F-15s and Black Hawks were under the control of the same AWACS aircraft (an E-3 Sentry, adapted from the Boeing 707 design), they communicated with different controllers, who were physically separated.<sup>102</sup> Further, the Black Hawks were using a different IFF Mode I code than the Air Force used in the no-fly airspace over northern Iraq, referred to as the tactical area of responsibility (TAOR); the Black Hawks had observed that practice for over a year but had never been informed of

the need to switch to a different IFF code.<sup>103</sup> The AWACS's duties included controlling coalition aircraft flying in the TAOR, and providing "airborne threat warning and air control for all Operation Provide Comfort aircraft."<sup>104</sup>

Minutes before the F-15s entered the TAOR, the Black Hawks entered a mountainous valley, causing radar and IFF contacts to fade.<sup>105</sup> The AWACS, which unlike the fighters monitored the Black Hawks' IFF code, still received intermittent IFF signals from them, and IFF returns were visible on its radar scopes.<sup>106</sup>

The AWACS, which was flying with a crew of nineteen, had had earlier radio contact with the only four aircraft in the TAOR—the two F-15s and the two Army UH-60s.<sup>107</sup> Although the AWACS's crew members were all individually well trained and experienced, this was its first flight as a crew in the TAOR, and two instructors had been added.<sup>108</sup> Unfortunately, at the time of the shoot-down one instructor was in the galley on break, and the second was taking a nap.<sup>109</sup> Also, two other members of the crew were reading books, one was asleep, and another was monitoring radios with his eyes closed.<sup>110</sup> Further, the AWACS crew was laboring under some confusion as to its helicopter-tracking responsibilities.<sup>111</sup>

Ultimately, after an exhaustive investigation, an Air Force investigation board found that the incident "was 'caused by a chain of events,'" which was ultimately summarized by the secretary of defense as comprising four factors:

- The F-15 pilots misidentified the Black Hawks.
- The AWACS crew failed to intervene.
- Eagle flight [the Army Black Hawks] and their operations were not integrated into the Task Force.
- The Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) systems failed.<sup>112</sup>

The Air Force preferred (i.e., formally initiated) dereliction-of-duty charges against five members of the AWACS crew, preferred negligent-homicide and dereliction-of-duty charges against the second (wingman) pilot, and granted immunity to the lead pilot in exchange for his testimony.<sup>113</sup> However, the article 32 hearing, the military's functional equivalent of a grand-jury proceeding, referred only one individual to a court-martial (i.e., ordered the charges prosecuted). The AWACS senior director, an Air Force captain, was tried for dereliction of duty, for "allegedly failing to adequately supervise the AWACS crew and not notifying the fighters of the Army helicopters' presence."<sup>114</sup> The captain was acquitted. In response, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force grounded the two pilots and three AWACS crew members and issued career-ending letters of disapproval to those five, as well as two supervisory general officers.<sup>115</sup>

The entire court-martial process proved controversial and ultimately unsatisfying to the families of the victims and to many in the Air Force. Several of the victims' families and some within the uniformed Air Force leadership were upset that no one was held publicly accountable through the military justice system, while some in the AWACS community complained that singling out the senior director was an unfair and morale-degrading effort to blame the AWACS crew and reflected an institutional bias in favor of pilots.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, responding to criticism that the accused had been unfairly singled out for prosecution, Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall took the unusual, and ultimately unsuccessful, step of asking Secretary of Defense William Perry to halt the proceedings, although she also possessed such authority.<sup>117</sup>

### *Afghanistan and the Accidental Bombing of Canadian Troops*

On 12 April 2002, an Air National Guard F-16 flying over Afghanistan dropped a five-hundred-pound laser-guided bomb on Canadian forces participating in a nighttime live-fire exercise in a training area used regularly by coalition forces for such purposes.<sup>118</sup> The bomb wounded eight Canadian soldiers and killed four, the first Canadian soldiers to die in combat since the Korean War.<sup>119</sup>

The two F-16s had been flying at approximately fifteen thousand feet, at the end of a ten-hour patrol, when they saw ground fire and thought they were being shot at by ground forces and "a piece of artillery."<sup>120</sup> The wingman contacted an Air Force AWACS and requested permission to engage the targets with 20-mm fire, but the AWACS replied, "Hold fire. I need details on safire [surface-to-air fire]."<sup>121</sup> The lead pilot too noted that they needed to "make sure it's not friendlies."<sup>122</sup> After the pilots' evasive maneuvers to avoid the perceived attack, the wingman announced that he was "rolling in in self-defense," to which the AWACS replied, "Boss man copies."<sup>123</sup> Both pilots then used lasers to pinpoint the target, and the wingman released the bomb.<sup>124</sup> Afterward, the wingman asked, "Can you confirm they were shooting us?" to which the AWACS replied, "You're cleared. Self-defense."<sup>125</sup>

A U.S.-Canadian investigation and a separate Canadian investigation found the two pilots to be at fault, although the Canadian report noted that the pilots had not been informed of the training exercise.<sup>126</sup> When the Air Force preferred charges against the two pilots for manslaughter, aggravated assault, and dereliction of duty, the article 32 officer recommended against a court-martial, despite opining that sufficient evidence existed, in favor of nonjudicial punishment.<sup>127</sup> The Eighth Air Force commander intended to drop all charges against the lead pilot, issue him a letter of reprimand, and remove him from the promotion list but permit him to retire; he accepted the article 32 officer's recommendation that the pilot who had actually dropped the bomb face nonjudicial punishment

under article 15.<sup>128</sup> Defense attorneys had suggested that the pilots' error might have been attributable to amphetamines, known as "go pills," which the Air Force issued to pilots for long missions.<sup>129</sup>

The wingman initially rejected the article 15 offer and elected to go to court-martial but changed his mind after being assured that he would be allowed to serve until he was eligible for retirement.<sup>130</sup> Ultimately, the Eighth Air Force commander rejected a self-defense argument, issued the pilot a harshly worded reprimand, and fined him \$5,672.<sup>131</sup>

The application of the military justice system to this friendly-fire incident again proved controversial. The two pilots, members of the Illinois National Guard, enjoyed local support during the military proceedings, including a fund-raiser by the governor of Illinois to pay for their legal fees.<sup>132</sup> Air Force officers voiced opinions both supportive and critical of the two pilots;<sup>133</sup> one Air Force colonel was reprimanded for alleging that the Air Force investigative board was simply "looking for someone to blame."<sup>134</sup> Many Canadians harbored bitter feelings about the incident.<sup>135</sup>

#### THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD . . .

Some friendly-fire incidents, while tragic, are also understandable and should not rise to the level of court-martial offenses. Indeed, they may warrant no punishment of any kind. Combatants must often make split-second decisions concerning when and whom to shoot. Their judgment may be clouded by reduced visibility, fatigue, or fear. These are the oft-described "fog of war" scenarios. One obvious example is the shooting of Stonewall Jackson by his own troops: Jackson and his party came from the direction of the enemy lines, at night, in a pause after an extended period of combat, while the Confederates were still in contact with Union forces. Other incidents are infinitely more difficult to understand. The 1994 shoot-down of the Army Black Hawk helicopters stands out as one such example.

Equally puzzling, given the relative historical frequency of such accidental killings, is the almost complete dearth of friendly-fire courts-martial. Further, when the rare friendly-fire incident is referred to trial, the result appears to be almost invariably acquittal. Not having made the referral decisions, heard the evidence, or voted to acquit, one can only guess at the causes of this anomaly.

Perhaps one is the frequency of these incidents, leading the military community to accept them as the unfortunate norm in combat—"There but for the grace of God go I." Perhaps it is the difficulty of fixing legal accountability in a chaotic environment, or isolating the actionable mistake in a series of errors, or of attempting to focus responsibility on an otherwise good—perhaps stellar—soldier who has made a horrible, but not malicious, mistake. One

powerful argument often raised against such courts-martial is the potentially adverse effect on the morale and fighting abilities of those in combat, that it might make them hesitant. Further, one commentator suggests there may exist an institutional cultural impediment—"the military's long unspoken 'non-legal' response to fratricide."<sup>136</sup>

The apparent lack of success of the military's criminal justice system does not appear to be a function of how the law is written but rather of how it is applied. For some the failure of the military justice system to hold criminally accountable those responsible for friendly-fire deaths is a travesty of justice, the product of a system that places too much authority in the hands of commanders and of an institutional culture of self-protection and unaccountability. However, it is more likely that the selective use of the military's justice system, and its even less frequent successes, simply reflects the repeated judgment of a military society, with its unique culture, values, and mores, balancing concepts of justice and discipline as it applies a criminal system to conduct under the stress of combat. Service members who make decisions to pursue courts-martial or determine innocence and guilt are in the same community as those who must make the split-second, life-and-death decisions in chaotic combat situations. When a service member is referred for court-martial and subsequently convicted of a fratricide-related offense, those decisions will have been made by members of a military community particularly sensitive to the collateral effects of such proceedings and to the circumstances within which the challenged decisions are made. In any case, even when those responsible for friendly-fire deaths are not held criminally responsible, they remain subject to other forms of punishment, a less severe but often career-ending regime of nonjudicial punishment, reprimands, and adverse evaluations.

Regardless, some things appear certain. First, there will continue to be friendly-fire incidents. If history is an accurate gauge, they are inevitable. Second, regardless of the cause or circumstances, friendly-fire charges will remain controversial and difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt in courts-martial. While the prosecution attempts to second-guess the decisions of combatants, others will second-guess the decision to pursue court-martial, and still others will question the military's failure to hold someone criminally responsible for friendly-fire deaths. Given the frequency of multiservice and multinational incidents, greater transparency in the military justice decision-making process may be required.

Despite significant handicaps, there remains an important role for the military justice system. There will be occasions when the facts are so egregious, the culpability so pronounced, or the dereliction of duty so manifest that the military community will hold its own criminally accountable.

## NOTES

- The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not represent the position of any federal agency.
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## COMMENTARY

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### CHANGING INTERROGATION FACILITY MANAGEMENT TO DEFEAT THE ENEMY

*Virginia Cruse*

“Abu Ghraib,” “Guantanamo,” “water boarding,” and “torture” are politically charged and evocative terms that bring to mind interrogation. Nine years into the Afghanistan and Iraq wars (though the “combat phase” of the latter has recently ended), strenuous debate continues over the efficacy of human intelligence (HUMINT) techniques employed to obtain critical information. It is my definite sense that this debate has become so politically charged as to be counter-productive. Since interrogation often provides the essential elements of information in asymmetrical-warfare analysis, perhaps the time has come to end the debate and ask the question, “How is the military intelligence (MI) community preparing and supporting its interrogators for the future?” Now is the time for MI to enact significant structural changes in interrogation-facility management to enable exploiters more effectively while providing necessary oversight. These structural changes should include an increased understanding of complex prison social systems and the utilization of central orchestration of interrogation operations.

By way of introduction, interrogation can generally be divided into two distinct

categories—tactical and booth. “Tactical interrogation,” sometimes referred to as “mobile interrogation,” takes place in the operating environment—that is, in the field or at the tactical objective. Its aim is to exploit quickly time-sensitive, perishable information for the mission commander. Should the tactical team identify a high-value individual (HVI)—one who is known or suspected to be directly involved in terrorist or enemy

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operations—it will generally transport the HVI to a holding facility for further questioning. This leads to the second category of interrogation, which I will call “booth interrogation,” since the interrogation booth in traditional holding facilities is the designated area for questioning that focuses on both the tactical and larger operational pictures. Booth interrogation is generally long-term, works multiple priority intelligence requirements, and is staggeringly complicated when compared to tactical interrogation.

Once transferred from the tactical team and made a detainee, the HVI becomes part of an intricate social system that involves interrogators, security personnel, clergy, medical staff, nongovernmental organizations and outside agency representatives, translators, administrators, analysts, and, most important, other detainees. While the Army field manual (FM) 2-22.3, which guides all Department of Defense interrogation, devotes particular attention to effective communication with guards and the use of interpreters, it does not focus on the larger social system.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding the effects of this social system is vital to a successful interrogation. It is a system that many terrorists have been trained to work to their advantage. This training takes the form of printed training manuals and doctrine, online discussion forums or chat rooms, and even e-magazines and autobiographical accounts that tutor terrorists in how to “triumph over interrogators.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the enemy understands how to use the complex social systems within an interrogation facility to his advantage, it is reasonable that the MI community should examine this aspect in greater depth as well and make the changes necessary to leverage all the moving parts of this system in a way that will give interrogators the greatest advantage.

## ISOLATION EFFECT AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

A traditional interrogation facility is relatively isolated from the combat zone. Once a detainee is taken into its custody, the United States becomes responsible for his welfare.<sup>3</sup> Conducting interrogation operations away from the tactical objective is necessary for security; also, the isolation produces a fishbowl effect. All personnel who work the mission, from clergy to guards to intelligence analysts, work and live together and, depending on the security parameters, there may be little outside interaction.

The isolation influences interpersonal relationships within the facility, and the detainees take note of that. While I am not suggesting that the facility staff deliberately shares information with detainees, detainees certainly talk to each other and compare notes about everything they see.<sup>4</sup> Security forces, for example, interact with the detainees simply because of their proximity, and interpreters build fundamental bonds with detainees through language and, often,

religion.<sup>5</sup> Even informal relationships between staff and interrogators can have the potential either to sabotage or to promote an interrogator's intelligence collection mission inside the booth. When an interrogator enters the booth to conduct questioning, it is likely that he is already a known entity to the detainee.

This makes an interrogator's reputation among the population as important as his rapport with the individual—maybe more so, depending on the value a specific detainee group places on character. “Reputation management,” therefore, becomes paramount for successful intelligence collection. Word of how an interrogator interacts with a detainee or a facility staff member spreads quickly, especially to the detainees themselves.

While isolation may appear to be a disadvantage for managing a detainee population's perceptions, seclusion can provide a unique opportunity. The fishbowl effect is ideally favorable in highly controlled, well structured environments that can leverage centers of influence by design. An example of this is boot camp.

### SEND IN THE MARINES

The military is adept in “breaking” people and gaining their loyalty. While this is accomplished during recruit training, a similar method could be effectively used in interrogation facilities. Recruit training is characterized by a tremendous structure, a rigid schedule, and indoctrination that is led by a group of drill instructors playing specific roles in the transformation of civilians into service members. A comparable structure in a detention facility could create an economy of force and maximize intelligence collection.

Drill instructors are trained to work as a team and are assigned such specific roles as “the nurturer,” “the heavy,” “the parental figure,” etc. They portray their specific roles knowing they will have tremendous effects on the group, as one role plays off the others. One could say it is the most effective “Mutt and Jeff,” or “good cop, bad cop,” technique in existence. The successful manipulation of the group is dependent on drill instructors' efficacy and on their ability to work together, as well as with all outside staff. Moreover, they are bound in purpose by a solid code of ethics and strong leadership.

### ORCHESTRATING A LARGER EFFORT

A centralized “drill instructor” model within an interrogation facility could tie together several small-team efforts, utilizing the interrogators' strengths and weaknesses and managing detainee perceptions of those interrogators prior to booth questioning.

At present, interrogation planning is often limited to the concept of a small team, or “tiger team.” Interrogator-analyst teams submit their interrogation

plans to a supervisor for approval. Once a plan is approved, however, supervisors do not orchestrate how interrogators interact with others in the detention facility, simply because their roles are big enough already. Supervisors are already responsible for the conduct of several tiger teams, tracking intelligence, and ensuring quick dissemination of tactical intelligence, as well as for several other intelligence and administrative functions. Yet success, if defined by the collection of actionable intelligence, is ultimately driven by an individual interrogator's ability to question a detainee, and that ability is linked to the interrogator's reputation within the facility.

In this model, experienced interrogation "leads," or conductors, attempt to mitigate inexperience and capitalize on the strengths of individual interrogators by assigning roles and working closely with their teams of interrogators to create and augment interrogator reputations. To this end, a conductor would require strong command and control over all actions both inside and outside the booth, as well as an understanding of the larger social system. As with drill instructors, the interrogators' roles would have tremendous effects on the group, and a conductor, in essence, would become the unseen custodian of a centrally orchestrated effort to influence all moving parts and shift centers of influence within a facility structure so as to promote intelligence collection. This rigid perception management would ensure that staff and detainees become participants (if unwittingly) of the overall design to support intelligence collection.

While this high level of perception management is not possible in an ordinary setting, the fishbowl effect makes it attainable in an interrogation facility.

## CHANGING PHILOSOPHY, COUNTERING PERCEPTIONS

Additionally, an orchestrated interrogation effort driven by strong central leadership can exploit a detainee's expectations to the interrogator's advantage. A strong conductor can recognize numerous holes in enemy doctrine or perception and act quickly to have the interrogators meet or counter them. For example, the 179-page field manual *Declaration of Jihad against the Country's Tyrants, Military Series*, commonly referred to as the Manchester Document, was located by police in Manchester, England, during a home search of an al-Qa'ida member. It provides specific guidance for operatives. Lesson 17 instructs al-Qa'ida operatives about what to expect and how to organize in a detention facility.<sup>6</sup> As in any guidance, it leaves holes for interrogators to exploit. This is only one instance; every blog, article, and fatwa (formal Islamic opinion) contains holes. A centralized effort can assure that interrogation tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) adapt as the enemy does, especially given the advances in biometrics, forensics, and polygraph examination.

Strong centralized interrogation is achievable within a highly selective and rigid professional structure, and the effects can be swift. Structure manipulation for management of detainee populations is nothing new. In 605 BC, the Babylonian empire captured Jerusalem. Rather than enslaving the population, King Nebuchadnezzar indoctrinated his prisoners, instructing them in Babylonian language, culture, and religion. He allowed them to eat at his table and even gave them Babylonian names. When the Medo-Persian empire overthrew the Babylonians in 539 BC, Cyrus the Great freed all Babylonian captives, but many would not leave. It is worth noting that this happened in the span of a modern lifetime.

Somewhere between lockdown and “friendly captivity” a balance can be struck, orchestrated by interrogation leadership (fully visible only to interrogation leadership), in the recognition that all staff and detainees affect detainee exploitation. This model has the potential not only to shape intelligence collection through interrogation in the short term (delivering timely tactical intelligence) but to shift the “hearts and minds paradigm” over a longer detention period.

#### EXPANDING THE ROLE OF NAVY HUMINT?

Although the Army has long dominated booth interrogation operations for the military, Navy HUMINT is the ideal service component to innovate and implement such structural changes. While the Army has groomed some of the best interrogation professionals in the intelligence community, it is an exceptionally large organization, with a spotty reputation (think human pyramids). The Navy and Marine Corps, on the other hand, have controlled the growth and quality of their HUMINT program through a rigorous selection process and willingness to dismiss unfit candidates from the training program. The program is autonomous, highly specialized, and built on a long-standing and successful model. At present, Navy and Marine Corps interrogation training focuses on tactical interrogation more than booth interrogation, which is understandable, given Navy HUMINT’s mission to support special operations.

The Navy and Marine Corps have an organizational culture conducive to change, since their focus on maneuver warfare and distributed operations has forced swift TTP changes in the field for troop protection and intelligence collection.<sup>7</sup> Marine Corps distributed-operations tactics are analogous to the changes necessary for successful interrogation facility management, “exercising tactical initiative and creativity based on their commander’s intent and rapidly changing rules of engagement.”<sup>8</sup> Due to its culture and its quality, Navy and Marine Corps HUMINT can rapidly integrate change, such as shifts to enemy counterinterrogation techniques like those advertised in *jihadi* chat rooms.

Expansion into booth interrogation operations would require significant increases for the Navy and Marine Corps HUMINT program; detention

operations at the brigade- and division-level interrogation facilities are labor-intensive. However, this would seem a wise investment. The Navy and Marine Corps HUMINT program is scandal free, which is remarkable considering the current operating environment, and it has a distinct lack of “battle scars.” It is the elite, thinking force that can operate to shift TTPs successfully in interrogation-facility management, fuse all-source intelligence into single-source operations for tactical intelligence exploitation, and shift the “hearts and minds paradigm” in the medium term.

It is time for the military intelligence community to conduct a clear-eyed review of its booth interrogation tactics, techniques, and procedures and to redefine itself. Navy and Marine Corps human intelligence is best poised to lead the way.

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#### NOTES

1. U.S. Army Dept., *Human Intelligence Collector Operations*, Field Manual 2-22.3 (Washington, D.C.: 2006).
2. For training manuals and doctrine, see *Declaration of Jihad against the Country's Tyrants, Military Series* [hereafter Manchester Document], available at [www.investigativeproject.org/](http://www.investigativeproject.org/). For online discussion forums or chat rooms, see “Forum Participant Shows Possible Detainees [*sic*] Tactics for Beating Investigation,” *Open Source Center*, Jihadist Websites OSC Summary in Arabic, 7 August 2009. For e-magazines, Abdul Hameed Bakier, “Countering the Counter-terrorists: Senior Jihadists Offer Advice on Security Techniques,” *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* 7, no. 11 (2009), pp. 6–9.
3. U.S. Army Dept., *Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations*, Field Manual 19-4 (Washington, D.C.: 2009).
4. Manchester Document.
5. Jae Jung Song, “The Translatability: Universals Connection in Linguistic Typology: Much Ado about Something,” *Babel* 51, no. 4 (1993), pp. 308–22.
6. Manchester Document.
7. Terry Terriff, “Innovate or Die: Organizational Culture and the Origins of Maneuver Warfare in the United States Marine Corps,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29, no. 3 (2006), pp. 475–503.
8. Vincent Goulding, Jr., “Just Do It,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 132, no. 11 (2006), pp. 32–35.

## REVIEW ESSAY

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### NEPTUNE TRIUMPHUS

*Richard Norton*

Willmott, H. P. *The Last Century of Sea Power*. Vol. 1, *From Port Arthur to Chanak, 1892–1922*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2009. 543pp. \$34.95

Willmott, H. P. *The Last Century of Sea Power*. Vol. 2, *From Washington to Tokyo, 1922–1945*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2010. 679pp. \$39.95

Author H. P. Willmott does not lack for self-confidence. This is evident from the first pages of the provocatively titled *The Last Century of Sea Power*. In a self-described effort to “explain, rather than describe,” Willmott seeks to shed light on all aspects of maritime power that have played a role in world affairs during the last hundred years. This project is of such scope that lesser historians might well spend their lives in research and never complete a manuscript. Other significant challenges inherent in this task include the need to paint with a fairly broad brush, without sacrificing critical detail—how to choose which elements to emphasize and how to deal with the personalities that populate the hundred-year landscape. While the degree to which Willmott has succeeded in this endeavor may be debated, the resulting work is important enough to find a place on the bookshelf of any serious student of maritime history.

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Not surprisingly, Willmott’s volumes are structured along primarily chronological lines. Volume 1 begins with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 and eventually arrives at the now all-but-forgotten Chanak crisis of 1922. These are reasonable points of departure and arrival. The Sino-Japanese War saw, among other things, one of the first meetings of modern battleships in combat and the emergence of Japan

as a naval power to be reckoned with. Chanak, as Willmott argues, can be seen as the end of strictly line-of-sight naval battles, as well as the point where fleets began to be replaced by task groups and task forces. The second volume tells of the great naval treaties of the 1920s and concludes at the 1945 surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay, with a U.S. Navy unparalleled in power, size, and ability to dominate the world's oceanic commons.

In the main, this approach works reasonably well. For the most part, Willmott refuses to allow his primary narrative to become bogged down in the weeds of description and successfully explains the major maritime muscle movements of the last century. However, readers who want their history packed with emotion, heroism, cowardice, and the feelings and acts of individuals are apt to be disappointed. This is not the place to thrill to the sacrifice of Navy commander Ernest Evans or the triumph of German U-boat ace Gunther Prien, much less to the tragic farce of U.S. Naval Academy graduate Philo McGiffin. A reader with a broader panoramic spectrum in mind will not feel the loss, for Willmott provides plenty of information to think about. Like the best histories of any genre, these books stay with you.

Both volumes are well written and can easily stand alone as significant and independent historical works. Of the two volumes, the first is marginally more useful, primarily because it illuminates developments and actions that have gone largely underreported. Willmott's work on the Dardanelles campaign is especially good, and his carefully built and well supported conclusion that the Allies were never in a position to gain control of the strait or knock Turkey out of the war is seemingly impossible to refute.

This is not to imply, however, that the second volume is weak. Its section on naval disarmament treaties is masterful. Willmott also does a fine job in covering such precursor events to the Second World War as the Ethiopian conflict and Spanish Civil War, and he offers a superb explanation of the complexities of the U-boat war in the Atlantic. His discussion of the weakness of Japan's strategic planning in the Pacific and its naval deficiencies in general is also convincing, though his relative lack of regard for Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto may surprise many readers.

Many elements in these two books deserve to be singled out for praise. One of the strongest suits of Willmott's work is his refusal to view naval or military power as the sole component of sea power. For example, the rise, fall, and crucial contributions of merchant fleets to national survival and military success are not ignored. This is especially useful with respect to the critical importance of Allied merchant shipping to Great Britain's ability to endure German U-boat campaigns and eventually emerge on the winning side of two world wars. Another area on which Willmott sheds light is the role of industrial capacity. While



the importance of U.S. industrial might to the eventual victory of the United States in the Pacific is hardly a new discovery, Willmott's argument that the Japanese navy, built primarily to defeat its U.S. counterpart, succeeded in doing so but in a way that meant its own destruction by late 1943 is convincing. So too is his associated observation that in the meantime the United States had built a much bigger and better fleet that would bring defeat to the shores of Tokyo Bay. Willmott's arguments are so strong as to imply that U.S. victory was inevitable and did not require exceptional strategists, tacticians, or leaders—a conclusion some will find uncomfortable.

An additional significant strength of this work is extensive documentation. Willmott provides a staggering array of charts, as well as detailed accounts of armaments, ship sinkings, and building programs. Each chapter contains pages of supporting data arranged in multiple appendixes. At the same time, Willmott does not belong to the "cult of statistics." The documentation merely supports his explanations and conclusions, and he clearly indicates when data are contradictory or not available.

Another positive element in this Herculean labor is the inclusion of what could be called the contribution of "lesser naval powers" to the historical tapestry. He does not overlook the ancillary events and the "lesser theaters" of conflict. Willmott examines everything from the roles of the Russian and Turkish navies in the Black Sea during the First World War to those of the Greek and Yugoslav navies in World War II. This is both important and refreshing, offering a greater understanding of the historical record.

Willmott does not back away from controversy but rather embraces and even creates it. Readers will discover there are times, almost always unexpected, when the author surprises, delights, and quite possibly enrages with his observations and opinions. On occasion he is surprisingly empathetic and almost lyrical. For example, Willmott is understandably sympathetic to the plight of Admiral Pascual Cervera, who commanded Spanish ships in Cuba in 1898, and his description of World War II Free French and Vichy conflicts borders on the poetic. Indeed, Willmott is at his most human when he anguishes over the sinking of the Vichy sloop *Bougainville* by its Free French counterpart *Savorgnan de Brazza*. He is equally empathetic when discussing Admiral of the Fleet John Rushworth Jellicoe's decision making during the battle of Jutland.

Willmott can also deliver an example with great effect. This can be seen when he puts the relative contributions of the Soviet Union and the United States into perspective by noting that in World War II the number of killed Soviet second-lieutenant equivalents exceeded the total combat losses of the United States. The more one thinks about this fact, the more the actual contribution of the Western Allies to the land victory in Europe seems to take on a different dimension.

However, these displays of empathy are rare. Willmott is much more likely to deliver his opinion as in a drive-by shooting. For example, he claims that the British systematically and deliberately exaggerated their role in victory over Germany during WWII for years. He also argues that the U-boat war was not won until 1945, not the more commonly claimed date of 1943. He even has the audacity to suggest that British naval gunnery and damage control left much to be desired, especially compared to those of U.S. ships—the naval battles of Guadalcanal notwithstanding. He also attacks the assertion that Admiral “Jackie” Fisher was the father of the famous *Dreadnought* class of battleship. His pen drips with disdain when he describes Winston Churchill as “fraudulently dishonest” in defending the Dardanelles campaign and “inept” in “terms of the direction of the overall operation.” One cannot imagine this has endeared Willmott to much of his British readership.

Willmott also reaches potentially controversial conclusions about several American admirals who fought in the Pacific. He believes that Admirals Robert Lee Ghormley and Frank Jack Fletcher were far better than their treatment by their peers and their subsequent reputations would suggest. Conversely, Willmott alleges that Admiral Marc Mitscher “deliberately falsified” the battle report of USS *Hornet* following the battle of Midway and that both Admirals Raymond Spruance and Chester Nimitz were aware of it. These assertions stand out all the more strongly in a work where individuals are rarely discussed.

Readers who finish both volumes will be forgiven if they find themselves eagerly awaiting the third. The changes and events of the second half of the century provide ample material for Willmott’s discerning eye and razor-sharp tongue. It is clear that the rise of Soviet maritime power must be an item for discussion, as will be the emergence of nuclear power and of maritime contributions to nuclear deterrence.

It remains to be seen, though, whether Willmott will be as bold in discussing failures of leadership in his third volume and whether he is as ready to take issue with the leaders of the Cold War as he was with their earlier counterparts. Based on his suggestion that the U.S. decision to go to war with Iraq was made with the same rush and deliberate propagandizing that marked the decision to war with Spain in 1898, it would appear that he is.

Perhaps the greatest question the third volume will answer is the riddle of the trilogy’s title. Does Willmott truly believe that the twentieth century was the *last* century of sea power, not simply the most recent? John Keagan suggested as much in his work *The Price of Admiralty*, only to be proved wrong. It will be most interesting to see what Willmott has to say on the subject.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### REARRANGING DECK CHAIRS: THE NEAR-NORMAL STATE FOR THE NAVY STAFF

Swartz, Peter M., with Michael C. Markowitz. *Organizing OPNAV (1970–2009)*. Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, January 2010. 118pp. Available at [www.dtic.mil](http://www.dtic.mil).

For any institution adapting to change, the dreaded “R-word” (reorganization) has come to represent an often disruptive, albeit necessary, transition. But as the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) authors Peter Swartz and Michael Markowitz clearly highlight, reorganization has been the near-normal state for the Navy Staff (OPNAV) over the past several decades. Conducted under the sponsorship of the Naval History and Heritage Command, this CNA report effectively tracks the numerous changes in the organization of OPNAV in response to changes both in Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNOs) and in the strategic and budgetary environments since 1970.

As experienced CNA researchers, Swartz and Markowitz have applied their knowledge and experience in analysis, policy, and history to assemble a highly accurate and credible compendium of the mechanics of change in OPNAV over a forty-year span. Swartz has special insight here. As a former Navy captain, he served on the OPNAV staff during part of the period covered

by this report and is currently CNA’s adviser to the Strategy and Policy Division (N51), giving him both an outsider’s and insider’s view of the process and personalities.

The study focuses on answering three principal questions: What have been the significant changes to the OPNAV staff, why were these changes made, and what observations and conclusions can be drawn from these changes? Swartz and Markowitz admit that the emphasis of the study was in the “data-gathering task” embodied in the first question. Also, some readers may find the “PowerPoint with heavy notation” format of the study off-putting. However, this format lends itself to understanding the complex structures, timelines, and machinations of the reorganization efforts of each successive CNO from the 1970s onward.

The taxonomy used by Swartz and Markowitz in presenting and categorizing the myriad changes in the OPNAV staff structure provides a highly understandable and ordered review of the complicated and sometimes confusing

organizational adaptations. Especially useful are the four “context” tables, one for each decade starting with the 1970s, that list by year who was presiding as CNO, along with the relevant Navy capstone documents, the Navy’s “total [that is, financial] obligation authority,” total number of ships in the fleet, new ships arriving in the fleet, active personnel, and new capabilities introduced. Juxtaposed against the numerous organizational charts in the report, these context tables help in understanding how each CNO has reorganized, not only responding to the variety of exogenous forces but also to implement his own vision for the future of the Navy. By recounting in detail the reorganization that the current CNO, Admiral Gary Roughead, has made to the staff, readers can see for themselves the most consequential changes enacted and, by extension, the most consequential issues facing the Navy today, in Roughead’s view.

Swartz and Markowitz identify two major changes made by Admiral Roughead. First is the consolidation of the Intelligence (N2) and the Communications Networks (N6) directorates into a newly created Directorate for Information Dominance (N2/6), a move that underscores the critical importance of a holistic approach to communications and intelligence, including the emerging preeminence of cyber and electronic warfare. The future impact of this consolidation could be quite large, given the issues at stake.

Second, equally as revealing has been the morphing of the staff’s internal think tank, “Deep Blue,” into the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) cell to meet the challenges of the recent QDR, and finally into the Naval Warfare

Integration Group (00X), in late 2009. One function of 00X will be, acting as a “special assistants” group, to provide the CNO with direct assessments of Navy programs and systems. Plainly, this CNO sees a critical need to be armed with as much information and analysis as possible to address the tremendous budgetary pressures affecting the Navy, which pose a special challenge to the future health of the naval force, a challenge requiring particular attention and focus.

Where the study itself is admittedly thin is in its narratives—which might have been richer—of the colorful personalities, nuanced forces, and institutional rivalries that sculpted the shape of the OPNAV staff during a very dynamic period. Those wanting an Allisonian-like examination of the organizational, political, and personal dynamics shaping this change will have to wait for what Swartz and Markowitz recommend as next steps: an expansion of the study to personalities, relationships, and in-depth answers to the “why” question. Until then, scholars of U.S. Navy history and organizational studies can be content with this well researched, accurate, and informative report.

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Drezner, Daniel W., ed. *Avoiding Trivia: The Role of Strategic Planning in American Foreign Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2009. 230pp. \$24.95

Students of American national security policy, particularly those without the benefit of firsthand policy-making

experience, frequently under- or over-estimate the difficulty of formulating and implementing strategy in the U.S. government. As a result, observers tend either to portray senior policy makers as dolts or incompetents or to engage in a sort of strategic nihilism holding that it is impossible to develop sound strategy in this day and age.

Daniel Drezner's informative collection *Avoiding Trivia* deserves to be read by scholars of both varieties. It contains essays that were commissioned for a 2008 conference held at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the State Department's policy planning office, an organization best known for its first director, George Kennan, and his successor, Paul H. Nitze. The contributors are largely scholar-practitioners, including several of my own counterparts during my service as deputy assistant secretary of defense during the George W. Bush administration.

The first section of the book includes contributions by Richard Haass, David Gordon and Daniel Twining, and Jeffrey Legro, who discuss the strategic environment and the challenges it poses for policy planning in the United States.

Bruce Jentleson, Aaron Friedberg, and Peter Feaver and William Inboden are found in the second section, discussing how strategic planning can best be implemented in the executive branch. The latter chapter, describing the resurrection of the strategic planning function at the National Security Council during the George W. Bush administration, is particularly insightful.

Essays by Amy Zegart, Thomas Wright, Andrew Erdmann, and Steven Krasner

cover the opportunities and limitations for strategic planning in the final section.

This work collectively emphasizes the imperative of strategic planning as well as why it is an art whose practice is difficult. It deserves the attention of scholars and practitioners alike.

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Nielson, Suzanne C., and Don M. Snider, eds. *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2009. 409pp. \$34.95

Samuel J. Huntington published his seminal work on American civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, in 1957. His analysis, reflective of the U.S. experience in World War II, Korea, and the Cold War, was designed to "maximize military security at the least sacrifice to other social values." It has provided a theoretical and practical guide to civil-military relations for more than fifty years. However, in this "new era" of the first decade of the twenty-first century, many have challenged the continued relevance of Huntington's theories.

In 2007, editors Suzanne Nielson and Don Snider assembled an impressive interdisciplinary group of scholars to analyze Huntington's theories in light of the American experience since 1957. Fifteen researchers produced a dozen essays addressing Huntington's main theoretical contributions: the functional and societal imperatives that shape the nature of the military organization, the subjective and objective patterns of civilian control of the military,

and the development of the military officer corps as a profession. The book serves as a dialogue on those theories and produces often-diverging viewpoints about Huntington's ideas and the condition of the American civil-military relationship.

Regarding Huntington's "The Crisis of American Civil-Military Relations," the book begins with the current state of civil-military relations. Richard D. Betts suggests that while tension may exist between the military and its civilian leadership, it is not unusual, given the realities of our democratic system. This is so because "objective control," although not of a pure form, has kept the military obedient to various administrations. Matthew Moten discusses Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's leadership of the Department of Defense, characterizing it as a period of "broken dialogue" marked by "distrust within the Pentagon and throughout the defense establishment." General Eric Shinseki, retired Army chief of staff, serves as a model for the military response to such strong civilian leadership, providing forceful military advice in private, while publicly supporting political superiors.

The assembled authors agree that military officers should avoid political involvement. When military and civilian leaders disagree on security policy, several authors state, resignation is not an option for the military officer, since it is an inherently political act. Yet James Burk comments that military officers are also morally autonomous and accountable for their actions, not "purely instrumental" agents of the state. Discussing Huntington's assertion that the "military mind" should reflect a conservative outlook in support of American institutions, Darrell Driver cites research

suggesting that no such unifying conservative ideology exists. Yet a number of authors comment on the overwhelming Republican Party affiliation of military personnel. Other authors discuss improvement of professional military education, expansion of military missions to include stability operations, "Madi-sonian" approach to national security and civilian control, and the responsibility of military professionals to build trust with civilian leaders of inconsistent military expertise.

In the final chapter, Nielson and Snider advance nine conclusions resulting from their research (however, not all contributors are in agreement). The last is probably the most instructive, that Huntington's work provides "continuing value" to the discussion regarding American civil-military relations. This book is best regarded as a commentary on Huntington's 1957 work, one that also provides a good review of the current scholarship on American civil-military relations theory and experience. However, keep a copy of Huntington nearby as you read it.

DAYNE NIX  
*Naval War College*



Asmus, Ronald D. *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 272pp. \$27

In August 2008, Russia shattered the post-Cold War peace in Europe by invading the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Though only days long, that war dashed NATO's hopes to expand to the Caucasus and sparked fundamental reevaluations of American and European Union (EU) relations with Russia.

Ronald Asmus's *A Little War That Shook the World* is an engaging read that combines the best available history of the war with a broader analysis of the geopolitical forces that led to it.

Asmus is well positioned to write this book. He was a senior Clinton official dealing with NATO enlargement, and since 2001 he has been a senior researcher at the German Marshall Fund. Asmus has wide access to U.S. and EU officials, and although uncommonly well connected in Georgia, he is not a supporter of President Mikheil Saakashvili. While Russian sources were not forthcoming, overall this is a very well documented account.

The book offers a blow-by-blow account of prewar diplomacy and the conduct of the war, with lively portraits of key personalities. Asmus also puts the war in the context of post-Cold War Europe, arguing that the war was about much more than Georgia. Striking at Tbilisi sent a message to Washington and Brussels. It culminated Russia's decadelong frustration with an international order it believed to be fundamentally against it. From a Western perspective, former Warsaw Pact nations had been freely choosing to associate with NATO and the EU, in an environment where force and "spheres of influence" were passé. Russia, under President Vladimir Putin, saw instead encroachment and a running roughshod over Russian concerns (as when NATO ignored Russia on Kosovo). NATO's halfhearted moves toward admitting Georgia and Ukraine in early 2008 offered Putin a window to act. Georgia's "frozen" separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia provided a pretext that was aided by the

rashness of Saakashvili and the dithering of the Europeans.

Asmus sheds light on important questions like whether the United States gave the "green light" to Tbilisi to escalate (Asmus convincingly argues it did not) and whether Russia's invasion was preplanned or opportunistic (Asmus believes it was preplanned). Ironically, Georgia's preparations for NATO membership hurt its military capability: when war started, 40 percent of its army was in Iraq or preparing to leave. According to NATO doctrine, Georgia had trained and equipped for peace-keeping operations, not territorial defense.

Asmus suggests that more adroit NATO diplomacy would have averted the war. He lays out a clear and compelling case, but given Russia's demonstrated willingness to incur costs, the claim is not fully convincing. Even President George W. Bush was far less willing to risk a U.S.-Russian conflict than were the Europeans. The disparities of interest, risk tolerance, and geography made the Western goal of a Georgia in NATO very difficult without a fight, but Asmus is correct that the United States and the EU could have better played their hands.

What emerges is a larger story of American overstretch and a failure to balance ends and means. The United States simultaneously wanted to have its way in the Balkans and the Caucasus; to obtain Russian support for Iranian sanctions, Afghan logistics, and counterterrorism; and to enjoy active EU support for all that, even as U.S. policies were highly unpopular among EU voters. Washington did not credibly back its Georgia policy militarily or politically, nor would it choose between competing



goals. Asmus thinks more skill and resolution might have carried this through, but one wonders whether the bigger lesson isn't really about the finite nature of national power.

DAVID T. BURBACH  
Naval War College



Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010. 311pp. \$29.95

Audrey Kurth Cronin's engaging and enlightening book examines how terrorist movements come to an end, focusing almost exclusively on terrorist organizations over the last half-century. She offers six pathways by which terrorist groups end: decapitation, negotiation, success, failure, repression, and reorientation.

One of the book's strengths is that it captures the full spectrum of possible outcomes for terrorist organizations and explains why particular campaigns did or did not end. The organization of the book is laudable—by looking in each chapter at tactics and strategies for ending terrorism, rather than simply marching through case studies, one is able to examine more soberly specific strategic approaches to counterterrorism and their effects. In this regard, this book will be very useful for policy makers and counterterrorism practitioners.

Cronin is cautious in making causal claims. For example, in her chapter on decapitation she recognizes that killing the leaders of terrorist organizations has sometimes contributed to the

eventual end of the organization (Sendero Luminoso, for example) but in other cases has not (Hamas). Though she does offer insights into the different outcomes, she tempers her conclusions by emphasizing that the act of decapitation provides "critical insight into the depth and nature of a group's popular support." In effect, one cannot know in advance.

The final chapter, "How Al-Qaeda Ends," attempts to apply some of these lessons. Cronin convincingly argues that decapitation will not end al-Qa'ida. Beliefs that decapitation will have a dramatic impact on that organization are "tinged with emotion, not dispassionate analysis." Killing Bin Laden, Cronin argues, might "actually enhance his stature, in practical terms."

Although Cronin firmly states that all terrorist groups end, this reviewer read the final chapter wondering whether there are numerous aspects of al-Qa'ida (all of which Cronin notes in some capacity) that make it a candidate for some form of irrelevant perpetuity among terrorist organizations. It is transnational in influence like no other group in Cronin's study. In 2001, al-Qa'ida struck an unprecedented blow against the sole global superpower. Cronin asserts that the group's message will have staying power for some people as a call for resistance that will endure for many years, no matter what Bin Laden's fate. This may be an unprecedented recipe for unusual longevity.

A combination of increased counterterrorism measures, a military offensive in Afghanistan, and al-Qa'ida's own underrecognized organizational and operational deficiencies have rendered the group unable to execute a successful



attack in the United States since 9/11. There is good reason to expect that 9/11 will prove to have been the apex of al-Qa'ida's operational effectiveness. But a final ending for the group's following may be generations away, when the memories of both 9/11 and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan have faded.

ANDREW L. STIGLER  
*Naval War College*



Brown, J. D., *Carrier Operations in World War II*. Edited by David Hobbs. Vol. 3. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009. 320pp. \$72.95

Developed by J. D. Brown over many years as the third volume of a trilogy, *Carrier Operations in World War II* is an exhaustively researched history, with the finest collection of aircraft and carrier photographs one can possibly imagine. Brown was an aviation observer for twelve years in the Royal Navy, a historian, and ultimately head of the Royal Navy Historical Branch. This work combines material from two earlier studies as well as new data.

At Brown's untimely death in 2001, his close friend David Hobbs, curator of the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton Air Base—himself a pilot in the Royal Navy for thirty-three years—took up the torch and completed the third volume. In doing so he produced a highly detailed narrative of carrier operations for every major theater of the Second World War, as well as the detailing of special carrier forces created for particular operations. Jumping directly to operations, without any preliminary explanation, Hobbs presents Brown's meticulous documentation of carrier

operations in a readable and highly narrative account.

Brown and Hobbs both have impeccable credentials for writing this book. Without question the material amassed by Brown represents a single-source gold mine for scholars and buffs alike. Unfortunately, though, there is not a single footnote in the entire volume. Thus what could have been a valuable scholarly work, replete with traceable linkage to original sources, is transformed into simply a detailed narrative. Yet it is well worth its price for the photographs alone.

The first half focuses almost exclusively on British carrier operations, moving from the Atlantic and Arctic oceans to the Mediterranean and Aegean seas, the Indian Ocean, and ultimately to the Pacific Ocean in the latter stages of the war. The remainder of the book focuses primarily on American and Japanese carrier actions from Pearl Harbor through preparations for Operation OLYMPIC and the projected 1 November 1945 invasion of Kyushu in the Pacific.

The volume includes an accurate listing of aircraft carriers and other ships, their embarked squadrons, the types and numbers of aircraft they flew, and the locations involved. Where appropriate, there are vignettes of ships' personnel, pilots, and aircrew. The photographs included throughout—many of which are from Brown's private collection and never before published—give an incredible insight into the aircraft and the carriers from which they flew as technology progressed throughout the war. *Carrier Operations in World War II* is an especially useful companion to other volumes considering specific naval battles or aspects of the war at sea.

With Hobbs's expert help, Brown's intended purpose of offering a clear picture of every carrier and air action of World War II has been achieved.

DOUGLAS SMITH  
*Naval War College*



Blake, John. *The Sea Chart: An Illustrated History of Nautical Maps and Navigational Charts*. Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2009. 160pp. \$39.95

Only on occasion will an author and publisher produce a work of remarkable beauty and excellence. John Blake's illustrated history of nautical maps and navigational charts, now available in paperback, is one such delight.

Commander Blake is a former Royal Navy officer and a fellow of the Royal Institute of Navigation. He not only knows what sea charts are about but has had privileged access to the treasure trove of British charting housed in the Hydrographic Office, which in journalistic terms is a veritable scoop.

Blake relates the development of the sea chart from the days when manuscripts were drawn on sheep skins, such as the portolan charts that survived from the thirteenth century, through the maritime ascendancy of the Spanish and Portuguese, then the Dutch, French, and British through the eighteenth century, when the discovery and charting of the coasts and the oceans of the globe had become a strategic naval and commercial requirement, to the modern Admiralty charts of today.

In doing so Blake brings together an outstanding collection of charts, some never before reproduced, culled from British, Spanish, French, Netherlands,

and American origins, with a look also at Chinese, Japanese, and Indian charts. Other sources include some of the most important maritime archives of the world, including the Library of Congress and the Hispanic Society of America in the United States, as well as the National Maritime Museum, Admiralty Library, and Hydrographic Office. The quality of reproduction is outstanding.

The foreword by HRH the Duke of York leads in to the opening chapters, which look at how navigation and navigational tools (including the development of the chronometer to allow determination of longitude at sea), celestial navigation, and surveying developed. Other chapters look at the chart as the key to exploration geographically through each theater of the globe, then chronologically within each chapter. There is also a multiplicity of significant and interesting historical charts and maritime documents, such as the personal tide tables of Sir Francis Drake, the taking of a slave-trade ship off Africa, and charts of the early-twentieth-century Antarctic explorers such as Captain Robert Scott and Ernest Shackleton.

Unusual historical insights are included as stand-alone vignettes, such as how the immense curiosity of Benjamin Franklin, both on his first transatlantic crossing from London to Philadelphia in 1726, and as deputy postmaster general for the American colonies in the 1760s, caused him to investigate the disparity between east–west and west–east crossing times. His understanding of the Gulf Stream led to his Atlantic charts that showed how best to exploit it and so speeded the mail between Europe and the Americas.

A comprehensive bibliography curiously omits any reference to the British Library in London, which holds the second-largest collection of manuscript sea charts in the world.

*The Sea Chart*'s appeal is to a wider readership than just mariners, leisured or professional. It is a must for all whose interest is in grasping how Earth's continents and oceans were charted and our world was shaped.

LAWRENCE PHILLIPS

*Editor, The Royal Navy Day by Day*  
Middlesex, United Kingdom



Norton, Louis Arthur. *Captains Contentious: The Dysfunctional Sons of the Brine*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2009. 185pp. \$29.95

"Honor," as Douglass Adair explains in *Fame and Founding Fathers* (1974), "is an ethic of competition, of struggle for eminence and distinction." "In a particular culture," he writes, "a sense of honor—a sense of due self-esteem, of proper pride, of dignity appropriate to his station—acts like conscience for a practicing Christian." Adair argues that "the lust for the psychic reward of fame, honor, and glory, after 1776 becomes a key ingredient in the behavior of Washington and his greatest contemporaries." Gregory D. Massey observes in *John Laurens and the American Revolution* (2000), "Like his fellow officers, [Continental Army colonel John] Laurens valued his honor or reputation above all else. Honor, more than anything, defined a man." What Christopher McKee says about the U.S. Navy officer corps of 1794–1815 in *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creations of the U.S. Naval Officer*

*Corps, 1794–1815* (1991) applies equally well to naval officers of the Revolution: "Unless this search for fame . . . is recognized as a primary element in the ethical air breathed by the naval officers . . . , a true understanding of that corps is . . . impossible."

Lacking this essential understanding of the place of honor in the value system of the late eighteenth century, Louis Arthur Norton, professor emeritus at the University of Connecticut and author of several works on nautical themes, has built a wrongheaded argument about the character of the Continental navy officer corps.

Norton's title encapsulates his thesis—that captains of the fledgling American navy were excessively concerned with their honor, making them unusually contentious, which in turn impeded their effectiveness and harmed the Continental navy. Norton believes these captains' preoccupation with personal honor and rank was indicative of dysfunctional personalities dominated by narcissism, ambition, obsession with order, and aggression, rather than indicative of the shared values of their time, the same values that motivated Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison.

The heart of *Captains Contentious* comprises five chapters, devoted respectively to the Continental navy careers of John Manley, Silas Talbot, Dudley Saltonstall, Joshua Barney, and John Paul Jones. The choice of these five is somewhat arbitrary, for one—Talbot never even held a Continental navy command. None of these biographies makes a convincing case that these men were more contentious or touchy about rank than their contemporaries in other armed services. Anyone familiar with

interpersonal conflicts within the Royal Navy of the era must dismiss Norton's assertion that the British naval officers were less contentious than their American counterparts. Nor does Norton demonstrate that the strong personalities of the officers he studies harmed the effectiveness of the naval service. This book has an extensive bibliography, but a single example will illustrate the sloppy use of those sources. Norton states on page 2 that common sailors who continued seagoing into middle

age often retired ashore as broken men, whereas the source he cites in fact refutes that notion.

*Captains Contentious* is not what it purports to be—a useful study of the connections between leadership and personality. Instead, setting aside its wrongheaded thesis, it is a collection of five unconnected brief biographies in the tradition of “lives of distinguished naval officers.”

MICHAEL J. CRAWFORD  
*Naval History and Heritage Command*

## IN MY VIEW

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### ANTHROPOGENIC WARMING

Sir:

In their article “Arctic Security Considerations and the U.S. Navy’s Roadmap for the Arctic” (Spring 2010, pp. 35–48), Rear Admiral David W. Titley and Courtney C. St. John make the claim that “the prevailing and well established scientific view attributes this [Earth] temperature change to anthropogenic emissions of ‘greenhouse’ gases” (page 35), based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report AR4, 2007. This claim has been challenged by numerous scientists to the extent that no “prevailing scientific view” exists. Moreover, the only authority in science is that of empirical evidence. All of the existing such evidence supports the opposing scientific view. Indeed the only “evidence” for anthropogenic warming is the output of atmospheric general-circulation computer models. While useful for studies of atmospheric dynamics, they are useless as prediction devices; they cannot even predict the current atmospheric thermal properties. The computed atmospheric temperature increase that is attributed to anthropogenic greenhouse gas (e.g., carbon dioxide) emissions results from assumed amplification of the heating effect of the main greenhouse gas, water vapor. This positive feedback effect is a priori built into the models; no physical justification for it exists. Indeed, all of the existing physical evidence supports the opposite, that the feedback is negative. Can models be improved sufficiently to become realistic predictive devices? Such is extremely doubtful, because of the enormous complexity of the atmosphere-ocean system as well as the complexity of cloud formation and distribution.

The dubious character of the claims of global warming as a result of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases has been quite well established by the leaked or hacked e-mails from the Climate Research Unit at East Anglia University in England. The former director of the CRU, Dr. Phil Jones, has admitted their authenticity and further admitted that measured atmospheric

temperatures since 1995 show no warming. The current attorney general of Virginia is investigating the University of Virginia for possible commission of fraud by one of its former climatologists. In any case, these e-mails show that even the proponents of global warming have serious doubts and in some cases have “gun-decked” the temperature data.

Do my objections to Admiral Titley’s article mean that melting of Arctic ice and the freeing up of the Arctic Ocean for transportation and exploitation of natural resources is futile? Of course not. The Navy and other agencies of the national government should, however, be aware for planning purposes that the cause of the vanishing ice is poorly understood, the thaw may very well be of short duration, and it may be due entirely to natural resonances in the atmosphere-ocean system.

Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, together with Captain D. K. Forbes and myself, published two articles opposing the “prevailing view” in the January 2010 issue of *Navy*, the journal of the Association of the United States Navy (AUSN). (See my “Climate Change and National Security,” pp. 28–29, and Hayward and Forbes’s “Response to Guest Column [*Navy*, November 2009],” pp. 7 and 20.) In addition, the AUSN published my letter on “Climategate” in the March 2010 issue of *Navy* (page 11).

The writer holds a Ph.D. in physics from Duke University and an M.S. in meteorology from San Jose State University. He is a research scientist, NASA-retired, author or editor of five books, and author or coauthor of 120 papers in the archival literature on various aspects of atmospheric science.

CDR. ROBERT C. WHITTEN, USNR (RET.)

*Rear Admiral Titley replies:*

Commander Whitten rightly points out that scientific inquiry is evolutionary in nature and relies on empirical evidence to verify theories. This is specifically why Task Force Climate Change (TFCC) has engaged over four hundred experts across 120 organizations spanning fifteen countries to ensure that the Navy has access to the best, and most current, scientific information.

While Commander Whitten is correct that several scientists have challenged the claim that human activity is contributing to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions, this indeed is the overwhelming scientific view. While no

single organization provides authoritative statements on what is accepted science, it is important to note that, based on extensive observational evidence, the National Academy of Sciences, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the American Meteorology Society, the U.S. Global Change Research Program, and virtually every U.S. university with an environmental science program have all independently come to the same general conclusion as the IPCC report that human activity is the most likely cause of climatic changes.

Commander Whitten raises a number of technical points that are currently the subject of debate in technical journals and of continued research in the science community. The main point, which Commander Whitten agrees with, is that the Navy must be prepared to operate in any future environment. Prudent military planning requires anticipating risks to prevent strategic surprise and monitoring trends to adjust planning as required. TFCC is exploring climate futures for the Navy, developing the required policy and planning framework, and monitoring the developing science of climate change to ensure the Navy is prepared to meet all future mission requirements.

REAR ADM. DAVE TITLEY, USN  
*Oceanographer of the Navy*  
*Director, Task Force Climate Change*

## PEDESTAL AS WE SAW IT

Sir:

I'm puzzled by Milan Vego's *ex cathedra* comment in the conclusions of his otherwise excellent article ["Major Convoy Operation to Malta, 10–15 August 1942 (Operation PEDESTAL)," Winter 2010, pp. 107–53] that "one of the major errors on the Allied side was the decision, based on false assumptions, to turn Force Z westward. That decision resulted in heavy Allied losses."

He doesn't explain what the false assumptions were, but let me clarify the situation as we saw it at the time—I was there as a midshipman on board the battleship *Rodney*, with an action station with the "Commander," or executive officer.

The reason Force Z included two battleships was to provide cover against the Italian surface fleet, based in the Naples area. Hindsight tells us that their battleships were empty of fuel—but at the time we saw them as a “fleet in being,” which could create havoc if they got in amongst a merchant convoy, protected by destroyers and light cruisers. However, as the Italian battleships still hadn’t left port by 1800, we knew we could safely turn back and head for Gibraltar.

The original plan allowed that Force Z would turn back at about 1900 because it would have been foolhardy to have taken *Rodney* and *Nelson* (two 1920s battleships with very primitive anti-air and anti-E-boat capabilities) and the carriers *Indomitable* and *Victorious* (who did not have a night-fighter capability) into the relatively narrow waters of the Tunisian Straits, which were heavily mined and infested with Italian submarines and Italian and German E-boats, with shore-based enemy aircraft to the northeast and the west. Everyone was aware that there would be heavy casualties transiting the Straits on the final leg to Malta, but we were not inclined to offer up a couple of carriers and two battleships for the slaughter.

And as it happened, the carrier *Indomitable* was hit with two or more bombs at about 1845. As an aircraft carrier, she was effectively out of action. She could recover aircraft but as soon as the pilot was clear of the plane it was pushed over the side to allow another one to land. Smoke was billowing out of her and we all thought she was a goner. It was at this stage that Force Z turned 180 degrees and headed back for Gib, along with its anti-submarine escort; don’t forget that just thirty hours earlier, the carrier *Eagle* had been sunk by submarine torpedoes, despite the combined anti-submarine screen.

This left the merchant convoy and its surface escort (cruisers and destroyers) to head south, with minefields and Pantelleria to the east and Axis-occupied Tunisia to the west, making their way to Malta as best they could under cover of darkness. Despite heavy casualties, PEDESTAL achieved its objective, which was to ensure that Malta would be available to us when we came to invade North Africa in November. In the circumstances (and with the forces available) what would one have done differently?

MICHAEL MCCGWIRE  
Swanage, Dorset, U.K.



*Professor Vego replies:*

Let me first say that I appreciate Dr. McGwire's comments in regard to my article. We apparently have different views on whether Vice Admiral E. N. Syfret made a sound decision when he ordered the entire Force Z to turn westward. In the main body of the article it was explained that the main elements of Syfret's decision to turn westward were that (1) "it was unlikely that the enemy would carry out any further major attack before dark," and (2) "reaching Skerki Bank would eliminate the danger from enemy submarines" (see p. 140). This part of the narrative was based on Syfret's report to the Admiralty on 25 August 1942 (cited in the article), where he stated: "In view of the magnitude of the enemy's air attacks at 1830 to 1850 it seemed improbable that further attack on Force 'X' on any great scale would be forthcoming before dark, and having reached the Skerki Banks, it was hoped that submarine menace was mostly over." Certainly, the state of damaged *Indomitable* was another major consideration for Syfret in making his decision. He was also under Admiralty orders (which are debatable) that all efforts should be made to preserve damaged warships and not damaged merchant vessels (see p. 114).

I still believe that Syfret's decision was unsound based on the facts of the situation known to him at the time (and not in hindsight). First, there was at least about one hour of good visibility (sundown that day was at 1917 and end of civil twilight at 1945; plus, there would be some visibility during the nautical twilight) remaining after 1855 that would allow the enemy aircraft to operate against the Allied ships. Syfret made an error in judgment in making his decision by relying on the enemy's intentions rather than what the enemy was physically capable of doing—that is, his capabilities. He lacked any intelligence indicating that the enemy would not continue with his air attacks against the convoy or that submarines did not pose a threat in the Skerki Channel (in fact Enigma reports on 11 August indicated that the Italian submarines operated in a sixty-by-forty-mile square north of Bizerte—see p. 137). Also, the Italian cruiser/destroyer forces based in Cagliari, Naples, and Messina remained a serious threat to the convoy. In fact, Syfret had precise information from Enigma intercepts on 11 and 12 August about the movements of the Italian surface forces from Cagliari, Naples, and Messina (plus one heavy cruiser from a northern Tyrrhenian port) toward Pantelleria (see pp. 137, 140). He had no way of knowing whether that force would concentrate as planned or be ordered (as it actually happened) to return to its bases.

Yes, despite heavy losses the operation PEDESTAL saved Malta and made a major contribution to the Allied victory at El Alamein. However, this does not justify Syfret's decision to leave the Force X and the convoy. He did not have any way

of knowing how many ships would be sunk or whether the tanker *Ohio* would survive. It was pure luck that a sufficient number of the Allied merchant ships reached Malta. A commander's decision can be properly assessed only by taking fully into account the information he has at the time, not the situation in retrospect.

DR. MILAN VEGO

*Naval War College*

## OF SPECIAL INTEREST

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### U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE STRATEGIC LANDPOWER ESSAY CONTEST 2011

The U.S. Army War College (USAWC) and the USAWC Foundation have announced the annual Strategic Landpower Essay Contest. Topics must relate to the strategic use of landpower; a specific topic of interest this year is the application of design in conflict termination. All are eligible to join and win except those involved in the judging. The USAWC Foundation will award a prize of \$4,000 to the author of the best essay and \$1,000 to the second-place winner. For more information or a copy of the contest rules, contact Dr. Michael R. Matheny, by mail at U.S. Army War College, USAWC Strategic Landpower Essay Contest, Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, Pa., 17013-5242; by telephone at (717) 245-3459; or at michael.matheny@us.army.mil. Essays must be postmarked on or before 17 February 2011; winners will be notified in early spring.

## REFLECTIONS ON READING

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*Professor John E. Jackson is the Naval War College's manager for the Navy Professional Reading Program.*

History never looks like history when you are living through it.” This notion of American educator John W. Gardner’s certainly applies to the men and women who are serving in the armed services during these difficult times. The history of the first decade of the twenty-first century is being written daily at sea and ashore, at home and in foreign lands. The facts and feats of today’s American sailors will someday be recounted in poetry and prose and will be added to the incredible legacy of over two centuries of naval and military heritage. The Navy Professional Reading Program (NPRP) provides over a dozen titles that illustrate the contributions made to history by sailors, soldiers, airmen, and Marines since the founding of the Republic 234 years ago. Of particular note are these four.

*Six Frigates*, by Ian Toll, was described when it first appeared by the *New York Times* as “a fluent, intelligent history of American military policy from the early 1790s, when Congress commissioned six frigates to fight the Barbary pirates, through the War of 1812. But the book’s real value, and the pleasures it provides, lies in Toll’s grasp of the human dimension of his subject, often obscured in the dry tomes of naval historians. Toll has plumbed diaries, letters and ships’ logs to give the reader a feel for the human quirks and harsh demands of life at sea in the Age of Sail.”

*A Sailor’s History of the U.S. Navy*, by Tom Cutler, is what the author considers a “heritage book, not a history book.” It tells the Navy’s history from the deck-plate level, through a series of engaging vignettes. One reviewer, Tom Miller, has written, “By emphasizing the values, traditions, and customs of the Navy and using the extraordinary actions of ordinary Sailors to illustrate these topics, Cutler has succeeded admirably in his goal. This crisply-written and compellingly-told informal history is just the sort of introduction that young Sailors and others interested in learning about the Navy will enjoy.”

*One Hundred Years of Sea Power: 1890–1990*, by Dr. George Baer of the Naval War College faculty, is an award-winning study of a century of U.S. Navy evolution. Edward Rhodes of Rutgers University has written of it, “This is clearly one of the two or three most important works in American naval history published in the last decade; it has the potential to become a classic in the field. Well researched and carefully nuanced, it provides a distinctive perspective on the evolving historical relationship between national interest and national politics on the one hand and naval power on the other. Not only is this a significant contribution to scholarship—one that will critically influence how historians and political scientists think about American naval power—it is an enormously readable work. Baer writes beautifully, and he has organized his material effectively. The book is fully accessible to anyone interested in naval history.”

*Jefferson’s War: America’s First War on Terror*, by Joseph Wheelan, is an interesting and compelling story of President Thomas Jefferson’s decision to launch America’s first war on foreign soil, an expedition that resulted in a resounding victory over terrorism over two centuries ago. One online reviewer called it “really readable history. High adventure and a real eye opener as to how things were during this time. It was enlightening to learn about some of our original naval heroes as well as the first landing and heroism of the very small Marine Corps of the time. I was fascinated throughout.”

The NPRP provides other great books covering everything from the Revolutionary War (David McCullough’s *1776*) through the Civil War (Dennis Ringle’s *Life in Mr. Lincoln’s Navy*) to combat in Afghanistan (Marcus Luttrell’s *Lone Survivor*). With books like these sailors can pause a little while making history to *re-live* the history made by those who came before.

JOHN E. JACKSON



